Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

Part II – Management Plan

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission

Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

July 2012

NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
Part II - Management Plan

Submitted to:

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission
U.S. National Park Service

and

Ken Salazar
U.S. Secretary of the Interior

Consulting team:

John Milner Associates, Inc.

Heritage Strategies, LLC

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Bergmann Associates

July 2012

Table of Contents

Part II — Management Plan

Chapter 1 — Concept and Approach

1.1 What is a National Heritage Area? 1-1
1.2 Designation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area 1-2
1.3 Vision, Mission, and Goals of the National Heritage Area 1-3
1.4 The Heritage Area's Preferred Alternative 1-4
1.5 National Significance of the Heritage Area 1-6
1.6 The National Heritage Area Concept 1-8
1.6.1 Guiding Principles 1-8
1.6.2 Using the Management Plan 1-9
1.6.3 Terminology 1-9
1.7 Niagara's Interpretive Presentation 1-11
1.8 Niagara's Visitor Experience 1-12
1.9 Approach to Community Engagement 1-13
1.10 Approach to Preservation, Conservation and Stewardship 1-14
1.11 Approach to Community Revitalization 1-15
1.12 Management, Implementation & Business Plan 1-16

Chapter 2 — Niagara's Interpretive Presentation

2.1 Vision and Goals for Interpretation 2-1
2.1.1 Organizing the Interpretative Presentation 2-2
2.1.2 Desired Interpretive Experience 2-4
2.1.3 Guiding Principles for Interpretation 2-4
2.1.4 Organizing for Implementation 2-7
2.2 The Heritage Area-wide Presentation 2-10
2.2.1 Implement a Heritage Area-wide Interpretive Presentation 2-10
2.2.2 Research and Documentation 2-12
2.2.3 Heritage Area Identity 2-14
2.2.4 Heritage Area Publications 2-15
2.2.5 Heritage Area Media Experience 2-16
2.2.6 Interpretive Center and Orientation 2-19
2.2.7 Interpretive Guides and Living History 2-20
2.2.8 Public Art 2-21
2.2.9 Programming and Events 2-22
2.3 Heritage Area Interpretive Plan 2-23
2.3.1 Natural Phenomenon 2-27
2.3.2 Tourism and Recreation 2-30
2.3.3 Power and Industry 2-34
2.3.4 Borderland/Border Crossing 2-38
2.3.5 Borderland: The Western Doors 2-39
2.3.6 Borderland: Clash of Empires 2-42
2.3.7 Borderland: Revolutionary Frontier 2-45
2.3.8 Borderland War of 1812 2-47

2.3.9 Underground Railroad 2-50
2.4 Regional Collaboration 2-53
2.4.1 Regional, National, and Bi-national Collaboration 2-54
2.4.2 Thematic Partners 2-59

Chapter 3 — Niagara's Visitor Experience
3.1 Guiding Principles for Heritage Tourism 3-2
3.2 Image: Tourism Branding and Messaging 3-3
3.3 Quality Standards for Attractions, Events, and Visitor Services 3-5
3.3.1 Setting Standards, Identifying Responsibilities and Benefits 3-5
3.3.2 Creating a Process 3-6
3.4 Wayfinding 3-7
3.4.1 Basic Wayfinding Tools 3-8
3.4.2 Wayfinding Signage 3-9
3.5 Hospitality Training 3-9
3.6 Packaging Attractions 3-12
3.6.1 Creating Regional Passes 3-12
3.6.2 Creating Packages and Itineraries 3-13
3.7 Transportation Options 3-14
3.7.1 Considering a Shuttle Service 3-15
3.7.1 Other Transportation Options 3-16
3.8 Visitor Orientation 3-18
3.9 Tourism Marketing Partnerships 3-19
3.9.1 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) 3-19
3.9.2 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Beyond Niagara County 3-20
3.9.3 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Local Businesses 3-21
3.10 Evaluation 3-21

Chapter 4 — Community Engagement

4.1 Planning Guidance for Community Engagement 4-1
4.1.1 Guidance from the Vision and Mission Statements 4-1
4.1.2 Guidance from Goals and the Preferred Alternative 4-2
4.2 Concept and Approach for Community Engagement 4-2
4.3 Communication: Creating a Public Presence 4-4
4.4 Educational Programming for Residents 4-5
4.4.1 Arts and Cultural Programs 4-6
4.4.2 Outdoor Recreation 4-7
4.4.3 Community Events 4-9
4.5 Community Involvement in Research 4-11
4.5.1 Creating a Repository for Research 4-11
4.5.2 Recording Community Traditions and Memories 4-12
4.6 Programs for Youth 4-15
4.6.1 Educational Programming for School Children 4-16
4.6.2 Other Youth Outreach 4-18
4.7 Organizing and Managing for Community Engagement 4-22

Chapter 5 — Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship

5.1 Vision and Goals for Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship.. 5-1
5.1.1 The Historic Preservation Approach 5-2
5.1.2 The Environmental Conservation Approach 5-3
5.2 Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship at the Regional Level 5-3
5.2.1 Regional Historic Preservation Plan..... 5-5
5.2.2 Regional Cultural Resource Inventory and Database..... 5-5
5.2.3 Designation of Significant Historic/Cultural Resources 5-6
5.3 Historic Preservation in Niagara County 5-9
5.4 Historic Preservation in the National Heritage Area..... 5-9
5.4.1 Research and Historical Context Statements..... 5-10
5.4.2 Research Advisory Group 5-10
5.4.3 Oral History Project.....5-11
5.4.4 Cultural Resource Surveys 5-12
5.4.5 Historic/Cultural Resource Database for the Heritage Area 5-13
5.4.6 Virtual Archives..... 5-14
5.4.7 Preservation Planning in Heritage Area Communities..... 5-14
5.4.8 Certified Local Government Program 5-15
5.4.9 Historic/Cultural Resource Preservation and Protection..... 5-16
5.5 Environmental Conservation in the Heritage Area 5-19
5.5.1 The State Environmental Quality Review Process..... 5-19
5.5.2 Environmental Conservation Issues 5-20
5.6 Preservation and Conservation Partners and Programs 5-21
5.6.1 Programs in the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation..... 5-22
5.6.2 Programs in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 5-23
5.6.3 Programs in the New York Department of State 5-26
5.6.4 Statewide Preservation and Conservation Organizations..... 5-27
5.6.5 National Preservation and Conservation Organizations..... 5-28
5.7 Participation in Heritage Area Planning by Federally Recognized Tribal Nations 5-29
5.7.1 The Haudenosaunee Confederacy (The Six Nations of the Iroquois)... 5-29
5.7.2 Stewardship of Native American Resources in the Heritage Area..... 5-30

Chapter 6 — Community Revitalization

6.1 Vision and Goals for Community Revitalization..... 6-1
6.1.1 Approach for Sense of Place, Sense of Community..... 6-2
6.1.2 Approach for Economic Revitalization 6-2
6.2 Community Revitalization at the Regional Level..... 6-3
6.2.1 Regional Positioning 6-3
6.2.2 The Great Lakes Megalopolis 6-5
6.2.3 The Toronto Metropolitan Area..... 6-5
6.2.4 Western New York Regional Economic Development Council..... 6-6
6.2.5 USA Niagara Development Corporation..... 6-8

6.3 Community Revitalization within the Heritage Area 6-9
6.3.1 Community Revitalization Objectives 6-9
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities 6-10
6.3.3 The National Trust's Main Street Program 6-16

Chapter 7 — Management, Implementation & Business Plan
7.1 Background 7-1
7.2 Role of the Commission. 7-2
7.2.1 A Business Plan for the Commission 7-2
7.2.2 Managing the Commission Effectively 7-3
7.2.3 Commission Committees 7-4
7.2.4 Local Coordinating Entity 7-6
7.3 Elements of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's Partnership System 7-8
7.3.1 Partners 7-8
7.3.2 Marketing Role and Partnerships 7-9
7.3.3 Federal Role 7-10
7.3.4 Tribal Government Role 7-11
7.3.5 State Role 7-12
7.3.6 Local Government Role 7-13
7.3.7 Partnerships with Related Agencies 7-13
7.3.8 The Need for an Organization of "Friends" 7-16
7.3.9 Thinking Regionally 7-17
7.4 "Partner Development" 7-18
7.5 Communications 7-20
7.6 Resource Development 7-22
7.6.1 Funds Available 7-22
7.6.2 Organizing for Resource Development 7-22
7.7 Operations and Staffing 7-24
7.7.1 Getting the Work Done – Staffing and Support 7-24
7.7.2 Financial Management 7-26
7.8 Strategic Planning and Implementation 7-28
7.8.1 Overview: Critical Areas for Focus 7-28
7.8.2 The Importance of Annual Work Plans 7-29
7.9 Evaluation 7-29
7.9.1 Federal Evaluation in 2020 7-29
7.9.2 Annual Evaluation 7-30
7.9.3 Meeting External Standards 7-31
7.10 Conclusion 7-31

Acknowledgments

Chapter 1 – Concept & Approach

Organizations and residents along the Lower Niagara River are creating the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area as a dynamic community partnership with the goal of enhancing the region's quality of life. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was designated by Congress in 2008 to recognize the national significance of the region's natural and cultural legacies. Focused upon telling the story of Niagara Falls and the Niagara River Gorge, the National Heritage Area seeks to strengthen community awareness of its history; support the stewardship of historic, cultural, and natural resources; and use heritage resources as a means through which to contribute to the regional economy.

As a community partnership, a wide range of organizations and individuals will participate in realizing the National Heritage Area's vision. Led by a coordinating entity, the heritage area will engage partners in activities and initiatives that are of interest to them and align with their missions, orchestrating the actions of many partners to achieve common goals. The National Heritage Area embraces the interests of its partners, builds upon existing initiatives, and connects interests and initiatives in ways that create new synergies.

NIAGARA FALLS NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Logo adopted by the NFNHA Commission in 2012.

This management plan presents the National Heritage Area vision and concept, and describes the program that has been crafted for its implementation. Each chapter of the management plan provides guidance to a particular area of activity, outlining the strategies and actions that the partnership will use to shape its program over time. A companion document, *The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Environmental Assessment*, describes the planning process through which this management plan was developed.

1.1 What is a National Heritage Area?

National Heritage Areas are places that tell a rich and distinctly American story. Usually managed by a partnership of organizations and local governments with a single coordinating body, they pool resources (cultural, natural, and financial) to promote and conserve the region for the benefit of both present and future residents and visitors.

'National Heritage Area' is a designation for nationally distinguished, lived-in landscapes. As of 2012, Congress had designated 49 heritage areas, each governed by separate authorizing legislation unique to its resources and desired goals. Recognition signifies a region's significance to American history and culture and supports interpretation to show how a region's geography, people, and ways of life have shaped both the immediate vicinity and the nation. The heritage area concept offers a collaborative approach to conservation that does not compromise traditional local use of the landscape and local control. Designation comes with limited financial and technical assistance through the National Park Service.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Although there are many kinds of regional planning efforts across the country, only heritage areas seek to engage residents, governments, and organizations in telling their stories and working in partnership to protect special resources and reach out to the American public. They are grounded in a region's pride in its history and traditions, and in residents' involvement in retaining and interpreting the landscape for all. They advance economic development through an appreciation that a region's unique assets are fundamental to success – asset-based 'heritage development' – and by fostering cultural heritage tourism as one aspect of a region's economy.

As National Heritage Areas mature – the first was designated in 1981 – residents and visitors alike are increasingly enthusiastic in discovering the high quality of the experiences they offer. They appeal to all ages and interests. Some have opportunities for walking, hiking, biking, and paddling. Some have festivals to attend and museums to visit. Many provide volunteer opportunities, group tours, and multiple-day excursions and can also be visited in combination with more than 80 units of the National Park Service.

The collaboration a National Heritage Area inspires can strengthen communities in many ways. In a world where American democracy is held up as an example for so many, heritage areas connect us to our roots, our stories, and our places – the wellsprings that made us the strong country we have become today.

1.2 Designation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was designated by Congress on May 8, 2008 in Subtitle B of Public Law 110-229 following years of public discussion and recommendations of the *Niagara National Heritage Area Study* that was completed in 2005. The heritage area's enabling legislation is included as Appendix A of this plan. The purposes for which the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was created, as delineated in Section 421 of the legislation, are:

(1) to recognize the national importance of the natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the National Park Service study report entitled *Niagara National Heritage Area Study* dated 2005;

(2) to preserve, support, conserve, and interpret the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources within the National Heritage Area;

(3) to promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;

(4) to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key developments in American history and culture, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;

(5) to enhance a cooperative management framework to assist State, local, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and citizens residing in the National Heritage Area in conserving, supporting, enhancing, and interpreting the significant historic, cultural, and recreational sites in the National Heritage Area;

(6) to conserve and interpret the history of the development of hydroelectric power in the United States and its role in developing the American economy; and

(7) to provide appropriate linkages among units of the National Park System within and surrounding the National Heritage Area, to protect, enhance, and interpret resources outside of park boundaries.

The legislation established boundaries for the National Heritage Area, designated that a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission be created as the local coordinating entity for the heritage area, and directs the Commission to prepare a management plan specifying the goals, policies, strategies, recommendations, and actions needed to meet the heritage area's purposes. The federally designated Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission was seated in December 2010, and began work on the heritage area management plan. *The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Environmental Assessment*, describes the background and planning of the National Heritage Area in additional detail.

The physical boundaries of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area are shown on its official map, referenced in its legislation (see Figure 1-1). The boundaries encompass the City of Niagara Falls and a narrow area of land extending north from the city along the east side of the Niagara River to Lake Ontario, including the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown.

In addition, the National Heritage Area may include sites located in Niagara and Erie Counties that are related to one of the National Heritage Area's four interpretive themes, wish to participate in the heritage area program, and meet heritage area guidelines and criteria. The heritage area's themes and a regional perspective on interpretive partnerships are discussed in Chapter 2 of this plan, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*. While the heritage area has a special focus upon the area within its official boundaries, other aspects of its regional vision and responsibilities are included in each of its areas of activities as described in the various chapters of this plan.

1.3 Vision, Mission, and Goals of the National Heritage Area

Using the National Heritage Area's legislation as a guide and in consultation with a wide variety of potential partners, The Niagara Falls National Heritage Commission developed a vision, mission statement, and goals for the heritage area that were reviewed and discussed at a number of public meetings and workshops. These elements provided a foundation for planning the heritage area.

The following goals for the National Heritage Area are organized around nine topics that are tailored to the conditions within the region and key to meeting the purposes outlined in the enabling legislation.

Vision for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is an internationally recognized biosphere, cultural icon, and renowned destination of historical significance. It enables the growth of a sustainable regional economy and the conservation of its natural and cultural resources in ways that benefit and unite its people and places. Its natural splendor and meaningful heritage are shared with millions of delighted visitors and celebrated by its residents so that its environment and communities are thriving.

Mission Statement for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area

The work of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region. The National Heritage Area works through a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike. Where initiative is lacking, the National Heritage Area will take action to fill the gap. In pursuing this mission, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area encourages historic preservation, recreational access, and environmental recovery. We value authenticity, cultural diversity, high-quality design, energy efficiency, regional and cross-border leadership, open communication, and transparent operations.

1. Heritage Area Management and Regional Positioning – Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.

2. Interpretation and Education – Assure the creation of a high-quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources, and environments in the Niagara region.

3. Visitor Experience and Heritage Tourism – Offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with a transformational experience.

4. Engaging our Young People – Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders.

5. Outdoor Recreation – Identify and support outdoor activities and programs, eco-tourism opportunities, and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.

6. **Sense of Place, Sense of Community –** Maintain and improve sense of place and community by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation, and enhancement.

7. **Historic Preservation –** Maximize the heritage area's significant historic and cultural resources as working community assets.

8. **Nature and the River –** Support restoration and enhancement of the heritage area's natural environment that uses a sustainable approach and engages the public in appreciating the river and nature.

9. **Economic Revitalization –** Foster economic revitalization through advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism.

1.4 The Heritage Area's Preferred Alternative

The work on vision and goals laid the groundwork for exploring alternative ways in which the National Heritage Area could be organized and implemented. Four alternatives were developed that enabled the Commission and partners to test ideas and explore alternative approaches based upon differing priorities and interests. Each of the four alternatives presented a particular point of view, a strong focus on a particular set of objectives, and differing organizational construct. The alternatives were discussed, adapted, and reviewed in a series of public workshops and resulted in the crafting of a Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative that was selected was titled *Focus on Visitor Experience* and outlined a blended approach, with respect to the other alternatives considered, in achieving the heritage area's goals. In the Preferred Alternative, the National Heritage Area will concentrate upon the three topics of interpretation, visitor experience, and community engagement. Details of each of the alternatives considered are included in Chapter 2 of the *Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Environmental Assessment*. The Preferred Alternative outlines conceptual strategies and recommendations for achieving each of the nine heritage area goals. These conceptual strategies and recommendations are presented in the chapters of the management plan where particular goals are addressed.

View of falls from Niagara Falls State Park

In the Preferred Alternative, the National Heritage Area will develop, coordinate, and enrich the interpretive experience from the 'Falls to the Fort' as a primary activity with connections to thematically associated sites in Niagara and Erie Counties. In addition, the National Heritage Area will play a leadership role in developing and maintaining a high-quality visitor experience, addressing visitor information, hospitality, transportation, wayfinding, and services. The role of the Commission and its staff, as the heritage area's coordinating entity, will vary versus the role of partners depending upon the specific activity. Where existing organizations are able to lead, the Commission will play a coordinating, facilitating, and supporting role. Where existing leadership is lacking, the Commission will be an active leader and developer.

Community engagement will be an equally important focus of the National Heritage Area and will be incorporated into as many programming initiatives as possible. The National Heritage Area will engage residents through interpretive programming, research, educational initiatives, historic preservation, employment opportunities, and support for local businesses.

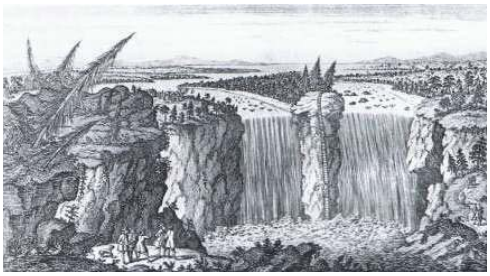
As outlined in Preferred Alternative, the National Heritage Area will implement a bold, creative partnership initiative combining world-class interpretive exhibits, living history, media presentations, and programming set appropriately into the authentic natural and community landscapes of the region. The National Heritage Area will provide residents with knowledge and understanding of the environment and landscape in which they live and will encourage exploration by visitors.

Following the selection of the Preferred Alternative, the Commission began development of the detailed management plan, describing the strategies, actions, and responsibilities of the Commission and its partners in the National Heritage Area's implementation.

Entrance to Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site

1.5 National Significance of the Heritage Area

The Niagara Falls and Gorge are rich in beauty and in stories. They are significant to the nation as a natural wonder and as the site of key events in American history. The narrative of the Falls speaks to Native American, Colonial, European, and African American experiences in the region, and to the ascendancy and legacy of hydroelectric power in the United States. Nature, parks, trails, museums, urban neighborhoods, towns, and power plants are the physical components of the region that help people experience and absorb this history (NPS 2005).

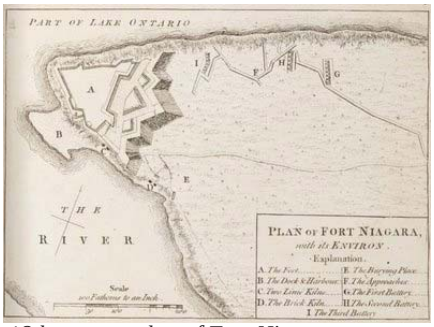


18th century drawing of the falls

In the late seventeenth century when Father Hennepin of France beheld the Falls and provided the world with the first written account of its dramatic landscape, Iroquois Confederacy and Algonquin tribes lived in the region and French and English fur traders operated there. During the eighteenth century French and British forces fought over control of the area and its access to the Ohio River Valley, the Great Lakes, and the interior of the continent. Fort Niagara, originally erected by the French in 1726 or earlier, became an English stronghold following the French and Indian War (NPS 2005).

At the end of the American Revolution, the Treaty of Paris (1783) awarded the eastern side of the Niagara River to the United States and established the international boundary between the United States and Canada down the center of the Niagara River, although British forces continued to occupy the Fort Niagara until after the Jay Treaty (1794). Following the establishment of treaties with the Native Americans within the region, American settlers began moving into the region. The Tuscarora Reservation, established in 1797, remains today to the east of the Gorge and north of the City of Niagara Falls (NPS 2005).

The international boundary was bitterly contested but maintained during the War of 1812. The construction of the Erie Canal from Lake Erie to the Hudson River and New York City during the early nineteenth century, an engineering success story, diminished the importance of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as a transportation corridor and with it the Lower Niagara River and portage around the Falls. The completion of the canal in 1825 and construction of the railroad to Niagara in 1838 made the Falls, the largest waterfall in North America, dramatically more accessible and a tourist destination (NPS 2005).



18th century plan of Fort Niagara

With the rise of tourism in the early nineteenth century came hotels, museums, tours, boat rides, souvenirs, and outrageous stunts – tightrope walkers crossing the Gorge on wires and people in barrels going over the Falls. Over time Niagara Falls became one of America's major travel destinations for families and for couples on their honeymoons. Uninhibited commercialism inspired a group of influential individuals led by Frederic Law Olmsted to lobby for preservation and restoration of Niagara Falls. After 15 years of effort, the Niagara Falls State Reservation was created in 1885, the nation's first state park. The process through which the state park was conserved and made available free of charge to visitors supported a national movement to use public money for the protection of land as public parks, and helped inspire the creation of the National Park Service (NPS 2005).

Prior to the American Civil War, the Underground Railroad routed fugitives to the Buffalo Niagara region because of its proximity to Canada, where slavery had been

abolished in 1833. Individuals and families escaping enslavement crossed the Niagara River to Canada and freedom. The village of Suspension Bridge, now within the City of Niagara Falls, was the site of John Roebling's phenomenal 1855 bridge that proved the feasibility of suspension bridge technology for both railroad and vehicle traffic. His bridge became a major crossing point of the Underground Railroad in the years before the war. Others crossed the river by boat from Lewiston and Youngstown, by bridge from Lewiston after its construction in 1851, and even by swimming.

The nineteenth century brought pioneers of a different kind to Niagara Falls. Innovative entrepreneurs and industrialists began to harness the water power of the Niagara River in the mid-1800s, and water-powered factories and mills were constructed along the River, Gorge, and canals. In the 1880s, the emerging technology of hydroelectric generation heralded a transformation in American life. Niagara Falls was the scene of an intense and high-stakes competition in hydroelectric technology involving such names as Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and Kelvin. Entrepreneurs constructed the first large-scale hydroelectric power plants with the capability of generating large amounts of electricity. For the first time, electricity was produced in amounts large enough to power cities. Emerging electrothermic and electrochemical industries requiring amounts of power not before possible were drawn to Niagara Falls, which soon became an industrial center and the cutting edge location for industries that transformed twentieth century life.

Mills on the Niagara River

Large modern factories were constructed along the Niagara River and Gorge. The city expanded with an influx of white collar managers and blue collar workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Utopian visions at the dawn of the era of electricity predicted a gleaming future of plenty. Niagara Falls was to be the model city of the twentieth century.

Niagara Falls grew rapidly as an industrial center and a center of technology and innovation. By mid-century, however, new realities set in. Revolutionary developments in product creation by industry from the early 1900s through the 1940s led to intense environmental degradation with the potential for significant harm to human health and the environment. Beginning in the 1960s with changes in technology, widespread availability of electricity from other power sources, and the transfer of manufacturing to overseas locations, plants began to close down, jobs were lost, and the population began to decline as people moved elsewhere for work. The link between hazardous waste and human health became evident, and conditions in Niagara Falls led directly to the awakening of a national environmental awareness and the development of governmental programs for brownfield remediation.

Maid of the Mist late 1800s

Today, the City of Niagara Falls is working hard and successfully towards building a new economy – one based upon service and tourism industries. The National Heritage Area, by protecting and illuminating the many natural, historical, and cultural treasures of the community, is one of several important initiatives in the region focused upon revitalizing the local economy and community.

1.6 The National Heritage Area Concept

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will create an **interpretive experience** that tells the region's story and encourages visitors to the Falls to explore the river corridor from LaSalle to Fort Niagara. High quality landscape exhibits will be installed at locations along the corridor presenting the heritage area's four primary interpretive themes and related storylines. The National Heritage Area's exhibit presentations will be world class and will be incorporated into the fabric of the landscape and the community in a manner that enhances community character and the quality of life for residents.

The proposed Niagara Experience Center, being developed by a separate non-profit organization, will serve as an introduction to the heritage area experience and will orient visitors to interpretive and transportation options. Existing historic sites, museums, and visitor attractions will be featured in the interpretive presentation and will have a leading role in interpretive programming. Heritage area interpretation will connect regionally to thematically related sites throughout Niagara and Erie Counties and in Canada through partnership initiatives.

National Heritage Area partners will collaborate in creating a high quality **visitor experience** that ensures visitors enjoy their stay and want to return. The National Heritage Area will welcome visitors into the heart of its communities, offering transformational experiences that exemplify the community they wish to be. Public and private partners will work together on programs, incentives, and standards addressing visitor information, hospitality, transportation, wayfinding, and visitor services resulting in a rich and cohesive visitor experience.

Throughout, National Heritage Area initiatives will emphasize **community engagement**. Regionally, the National Heritage Area will play a leadership role in historic preservation, interpretation, and heritage tourism, encouraging recognition of a regional vision and facilitating regional action, Locally, heritage area initiatives will support community revitalization and enhancement, focusing upon engaging residents and encouraging the use of heritage resources to build community character and heritage development to strengthen the local economy. The heritage area will support natural resource conservation and stewardship. Heritage area programming will proactively engage local young people in implementing its initiatives, building community awareness and appreciation.

1.6.1 Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles will shape implementation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Community Interests: Heritage area partners will work in the long-term interest of the communities, people, natural and historic resources, and environment.

Community Character: Building community character is central to the National Heritage Area endeavor. Creating a high quality of life for residents will encourage visitors to come and will help strengthen the local economy.

Authenticity: Heritage area partners will support authentic places and seek authentic experiences associated with the region's heritage and its stories.

Hospitality: Heritage area partners will welcome visitors and make them feel at home within local communities.

Partnership: The National Heritage Area will work through a partnership structure; heritage area partners will welcome and respect each other's input, perspective, and capabilities.

Communication & Transparency: The National Heritage Area will maintain a policy of openness and frequent communication within its partnership, with other organizations, and with the general public.

Planning: Good planning is key to a successful endeavor. Every action the National Heritage Area and its partners undertake will be well planned for successful implementation.

Resource Stewardship: Historic preservation and natural resource conservation underlie much of what the National Heritage Area does and are a means through which it achieves its goals.

Sustainability: The National Heritage Area and its partners will promote ecological and economic sustainability in their planning and actions. They will seek economic sustainability in their organization and operations.

1.6.2 Using the Management Plan

This management plan is a reference document and guide that will be used by National Heritage Area partners over the 15-year period under which Federal funding support is authorized in the heritage area's enabling legislation. The plan outlines the National Heritage Area's vision and goals, identifies potential actions that support the vision and goals, and provides guidelines and processes for undertaking desired actions. Partners will consult the management plan over the life of the plan as a touchstone to shape their collaborative endeavor.

The policies, programs, and initiatives outlined in the management plan are intended to be flexible and to adapt to conditions, experience, and opportunities over time. Each chapter of the management plan describes initiatives in a particular area of activity involving one or more of the heritage area's goals. The plan's recommendations and guidelines will inform decision-making so that future decisions are consistent with the National Heritage Area concept and program.

Management plan chapters are organized broadly into two parts. The introductory part of each chapter summarizes the background and context for the topic being addressed. It includes the National Heritage Area's goals related to that topic as well as strategies from the Preferred Alternative that were developed to support those goals. It concludes with a statement on the **conceptual approach** to the topic.

The second part of each chapter addresses recommendations and initiatives which the National Heritage Area intends to undertake related to that topic. **Action statements** are used to identify specific activities. These action statements are phrased broadly

so as not to limit flexibility, as there may be multiple ways in which a desired action may be achieved. The implementation of actions will be dependent upon priorities, identification of an entity to take a leadership role in an action, and the availability of resources for implementation.

Associated with each action statement is a **discussion** of that action and area of activity. The discussion generally precedes the action statement and provides guidance to help shape the manner in which the action is undertaken. The discussions associated with each action statement will assist in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of initiatives. In some cases, the discussion describes specific processes to be used in undertaking an action, including guidelines, criteria, and benchmarks. In other cases, the discussions are more conceptual and intended to shape and inspire thinking. Some discussions record ideas and directions that were discussed during development of the management plan but which should not be considered mandatory.

Potential actions identified in each of the management plan chapters are listed and **prioritized** in Chapter 7, Management Implementation, and Business Plan. Responsible partners are identified for each action. The heritage area partnership will use this list to create, implement, and update work plans over the life of the management plan. Every year the National Heritage Area should assess what has been accomplished and make adjustments for the future. The management plan provides guidance for those adjustments.

Aside from identifying the initiatives to be undertaken, action statements may be used to **evaluate** the heritage area's effectiveness in reaching stated goals. For this reason, the action statements are brief and distinct from each other. Discussions, on the other hand, will not be used for evaluation.

1.6.3 Terminology

As discussed above, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is a partnership endeavor that will be undertaken through the collaborative actions and initiatives of a wide variety of organizations and individuals. Throughout this management plan, the terms *Niagara Falls National Heritage Area* and *National Heritage Area* are used as the subjects of sentences delineating actions that will be taken. These terms are used to refer to the National Heritage Area partnership as a whole and not to any particular entity.

When referring specifically to the *Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission*, either its full title or the word *Commission* are used. Suggested roles and responsibilities of particular National Heritage Area partners are noted where appropriate in various portions of the plan and are summarized in Chapter 7, *Management and Implementation*. The voice of this document is that of the management plan as developed through a collaborative planning process. It is not that of the Commission, the National Park Service, or the consultant team.

1.7 Niagara's Interpretive Presentation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will create a world class visitor experience along the Niagara River and Gorge that attracts visitors and encourages them to explore,

providing benefits to the local and regional economy. Through the heritage area's interpretive initiatives, communities will be strengthened, residents will be engaged, and the region's natural and cultural resources will be recognized, preserved, and enhanced.

Creating a world class visitor experience requires an integrated program of interpretation and heritage tourism. Chapter 2 of the management plan, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*, outlines how the National Heritage Area will create an interpretative presentation that engages visitors and residents.

The management plan's interpretive recommendations are organized into three parts: (1) actions that should be undertaken heritage area-wide to support the entire interpretive presentation, (2) actions for presentation of each of the heritage area's interpretive themes and storylines, and (3) actions for coordinating interpretation of heritage area themes regionally at affiliated sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area interpretive presentation will create a range of interpretive experiences encouraging visitors to explore from the Falls to the Fort. The presentation will combine existing interpretation offered at visitor attractions with new landscape interpretation to be offered at locations within communities and all along the river corridor. This coordinated, high quality interpretive presentation will complement the level of quality envisioned for the Niagara Experience Center.

Within the City of Niagara Falls, the interpretive presentation will directly support the city's comprehensive plan by interpreting the city's history, enhancing public spaces, and encouraging visitors to explore. Downriver, the interpretive presentation will support implementation of community and Niagara River Greenway visions of linking communities and open space, enhancing community character, and supporting community downtown districts.

Each of the heritage area's themes and storylines will be interpreted in accordance with the concepts outlined in Chapter 2. For each of the interpretive themes, potential projects will be identified, prioritized, and organized based upon:

1. the ability of the project to present the theme and its key stories to visitors,
2. the timing within which the project can be implemented,
3. the capability of the heritage area and its partners to implement the project,
4. cost and the availability of funding, and
5. other potential issues and benefits particular to the project.

Partners who will be involved in the implementation of each project will be identified and engaged. Sources of funding for implementation will be secured, and a process for implementation will be developed and scheduled. An interpretive plan will be prepared for each interpretive project to be implemented in accordance with the guidelines for interpretive planning included in the plan.

1.8 Niagara's Visitor Experience

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will develop and implement a broad-based heritage tourism program that will enhance the visitor experience in Niagara Falls and along the Lower Niagara River. The program will be focused upon existing visitors to the Falls as well as new visitors, encouraging them to explore the heritage area from the Falls to the Fort. Chapter 3 of the management plan, *Niagara's Visitor Experience* outlines recommended strategies and actions on tourism development, visitor experience, and marketing within the heritage area.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will initially focus on the enhancement of the visitor experience to provide a consistent, high-quality regional experience. After such enhancements are in place, the National Heritage Area will increase its emphasis on marketing activities. The primary investment and emphasis will be devoted to tourism development infrastructure improvements in the area between Niagara Falls State Park and Old Fort Niagara. Thematically related attractions in Niagara and Erie Counties will also be included in regional visitor experience packages, itineraries, and other tourism products and marketing materials to create a richer, even more compelling visitor experience for travelers.

Early 20th century post card

The primary goal for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's visitor experience is "to offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with transformational experiences." To accomplish this goal, heritage area partners will promote the National Heritage Area as an opportunity for a deeper, more meaningful experience of the landscapes and communities along the Niagara River corridor. Programs, incentives, and standards will be developed that will improve the overall visitor experience and link attractions together into a cohesive visitor experience.

While the recommended actions include both tourism marketing and tourism product development, it is anticipated that in many cases the National Heritage Area will play a leadership role for tourism product development and a supporting role for tourism marketing. Between the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (BNCVB) alone, millions of dollars are already being invested annually in marketing the Niagara Falls region. Conversely, there are no regional partners focused entirely on tourism product development for the Niagara Falls region. Thus, focusing on this role and the opportunity to build collaborative partnerships to build bridges between different constituencies will be a primary focus for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's efforts related to the visitor experience.

Of all the tourism infrastructure needs discussed during stakeholder interviews, transportation rose to the top as one of the largest challenges. Accordingly, the management plan includes actions to address transportation through the development of multi-modal transportation offerings. A quality standards program to encourage and reward excellence, a region-wide hospitality training program, and a regional tourism pass are other critical

steps the National Heritage Area can take toward addressing key tourism challenges. The development of supporting products and promotional efforts will round out the National Heritage Area's activities to expand and improve the Niagara visitor experience.

1.9 Approach to Community Engagement

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will engage communities and residents and cultivate lasting public understanding and support in pursuit of the heritage area's mission, goals, and vision. Community engagement initiatives are outlined in Chapter 4 of the management plan. Just about every activity the heritage area undertakes will have a community engagement dimension. Many of the community engagement initiatives included in Chapter 4 are therefore actions that are identified in other chapters of the management plan, focusing on residents as the primary audience. The heritage area's community engagement strategy is particularly oriented toward educational approaches and programming for youth.

Engaging individuals and leaders, neighborhoods and communities, and organizations and institutions of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is critical. The National Heritage Area must offer ways for residents to build their appreciation for the heritage area's resources, stories, and opportunities. That appreciation is critical in building support for community investment in preservation, interpretation, and development to support long term improvements. Moreover, residents themselves possess stories, affect the sense of hospitality that visitors experience, and can volunteer for the many activities that will need personal investments of time. Deep community engagement, therefore, can enrich the heritage area in many important ways.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is organized to incorporate community engagement aspects into practically all of its activities, encouraging all with a stake in the success of the heritage area to take advantage of as many opportunities to build community engagement as possible. The National Heritage Area will seek to stimulate the creation of a rich and diverse program of community engagement through five strategies:

1. Creating visible programs and a public presence so that residents come to view the heritage area as a regular element of community life.

2. Encouraging well-designed, coordinated educational programs for residents, students, and visitors. While much of this overlaps with the interpretive programs described in Chapter 2, there are elements that may especially appeal to local audiences, including community-based arts and cultural programs and outdoor recreation – with activities in both of these including community events, from public lectures to festivals.

3. Encouraging community research, to record the detailed oral traditions that provide texture and life to community history and build community knowledge and pride. This activity should be supported by a well-provided-for central resource for archiving and accessing documentary and material collections, oral history, and research.

4. Creating a rich array of ways to reach and serve the youth of this region, encouraging them to gain knowledge and direct experience of heritage development and tourism

in much the same way that youth education curricula now include environmental education. In terms of investing in the civic future of the heritage area for long term dividends, this particular element may be one of the best ways to spend the heritage area's resources – and there are many possibilities for such programming. This goes well beyond any ambition for youth education about the region's history and environment, although these provide a foundation for such programming. Engaging young people in leadership development and creating a deep understanding of community functions, needs, and priorities is a good investment in lasting leadership for the heritage area and its communities.

5. Aiding partners in coordinating and expanding their programs in all of these ways, the Commission expects to become a central, "first response" provider of technical assistance, clearinghouse for information, and other kinds of support for public and school-based education. Both visitors and residents will benefit from such activities, but the focus will be on residents.

1.10 Approach to Preservation, Conservation and Stewardship

Chapter 5 of the management plan outlines a program through which the National Heritage Area and its partners will support the preservation of cultural resources, conservation of natural resources, and stewardship strategies for both. It also focuses on established best practices and recent innovations through which cultural and natural resources are preserved and conserved. The strengthening of local preservation and conservation efforts in identifying, designating, protecting, interpreting and promoting significant resources is a key factor in accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth by the heritage area. Success also depends upon the cooperation and collaboration of key cultural groups, academia, nonprofit organizations, the business sector, and governmental jurisdictions as important heritage area partners.

The National Heritage Area's approach to historic preservation will be implemented through activities at the regional, county, and local levels. Regionally, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will work in partnership with Preservation Buffalo Niagara on preservation initiatives in Erie and Niagara Counties with the National Heritage Area leading those initiatives within Niagara County. The two organizations will collaborate as preservation leaders in a joint program that engages and coordinates other local and regional organizations with preservation interests within the two counties.

In Niagara County, as part of its regional program, the National Heritage Area will coordinate and lead a county-wide preservation network, engaging communities, local preservation organizations, and individual preservationists in an ongoing dialogue and forum that provides information, advice, and mutual assistance to participants. Through regular communications and workshops, network participants will be informed of each others activities, exchange information, and coordinate preservation initiatives. The National Heritage Area will provide advice and support to local preservation activities when possible and appropriate.

Within its legislative boundaries, the National Heritage Area will work directly with preservation interests within the City of Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown to develop and implement preservation plans addressing a wide range of potential

initiatives tailored to the needs of each community. The heritage area's initiatives related to interpretation, heritage tourism, visitor experience, and community engagement will support and help implement preservation strategies developed for the communities.

The National Heritage Area will support the initiatives of other local and regional leaders with respect to natural resource conservation and stewardship within the heritage area. In concert with the Niagara River Greenway, a number of local and regional conservation organizations are undertaking programs to study, rehabilitate, and enhance park, landscape, water, and wildlife resources along the Niagara River corridor. These important initiatives contribute substantially to the heritage area vision and will be embraced by the heritage area partnership.

The historic Frontier House in Downtown Lewiston

1.11 Approach to Community Revitalization

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will participate in and support community revitalization, planning, and economic development at the local, county, and regional levels. Chapter 6 of the management plan, *Community Revitalization*, outlines ways in which heritage area programs and initiatives will support revitalization in each of the heritage area's communities. The success of community revitalization will rely heavily on coordination and collaboration with existing partners and programs. In all of its activities, the National Heritage Area will advocate for an economic development approach that integrates resource stewardship and heritage tourism principles and values.

The National Heritage Area will assist partners in developing and implementing projects and programs that contribute to the revitalization of communities within the heritage area. Inherent in this effort is the understanding that the special sense of place for each community must not only be preserved but substantially enhanced. A community's function, role, and contribution in the context of the larger region are also important to identify and develop. In this period of governmental austerity, it is important now more than ever to collaborate with both public and private partners to establish programs, incentives, and standards that will improve the quality of life for the region's residents.

Business district in Youngstown

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will support community revitalization through three broad strategies:

1. The National Heritage Area will collaborate with national, state, regional, and local organizations in implementing regional strategies for economic development, environmental stewardship, and enhancement of quality of life. The National Heritage Area will support recent state-wide initiatives focused upon economic revitalization in Western New York and will work with other organizations in advocating regional approaches to community identity and economic cooperation.

2. Regionally, the National Heritage Area will play a leadership role in activities related to interpretation, heritage tourism, and historic preservation. Heritage area interpretation will embrace a regional perspective that will help broaden community awareness and cooperation. Regional interpretation will be undertaken through partnerships between communities, organizations, and sites in Niagara and Erie Counties as well as in Canada. Interpretive programs will attract visitors and help support the regional economy.

3. Locally, within its legislative boundaries, the National Heritage Area will orchestrate a coordinated set of programs encouraging visitors to explore heritage area communities. By focusing upon visitor experiences in the historic commercial cores of Youngstown, Lewiston, and Niagara Falls, heritage area programs will directly support small business development and the enhancement of community character. National Heritage Area programs and projects in all areas of activity will be tailored to local community revitalization goals and strategies.

Many of the programs and initiatives that will support community revitalization within the National Heritage Area are described in other chapters of this management plan. Chapter 2 on interpretation, Chapter 3 on visitor experience, and Chapter 5 on historic preservation and natural resource conservation are particularly significant. These various programs and initiatives work together in combination to support revitalization strategies in each of the three heritage area communities. The National Heritage Area will work with each individual community to shape its programs to community interests and needs.

1.12 Management, Implementation, and Business Plan

A business plan for management and implementation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is included in Chapter 7 of this management plan. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is a collective effort, involving a wide variety of organizations and entities with a stake in the heritage area's success. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission serves as the heritage area's coordinating entity, but the 'National Heritage Area' includes all of the initiative's partners.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission communicates the management plan's vision and provides a forum for key players affecting heritage development in the region. It seeks success through strong communications, visible, well-designed programs, empowerment of partners, and articulation of high standards for the visitor experience. It spends federal funds –including but not limited to sharing those funds with partners through matching grants – and raises other funds to implement the management plan.

Chapter 7 of the management plan describes how the National Heritage Area is organized and will function including both the Commission and partners. With respect to the Commission, the chapter describes its role as coordinating entity, how it is to be structured, how it is to engage in partnerships – framing most of its programs around the concept of "partner development" – how it is to communicate with the public and do its part in raising the funds necessary to implement this plan, and how it is to organize its operations.

With respect to partners, the plan describes programs and activities in which various partners are expected to participate and play leading roles. Several key partnering organizations, most of which have a seat on the Commission, are described, and the heritage area's 'partnerships system' is outlined.

A strategic plan is also presented in the chapter. The strategic plan is simplified version of the entire management plan, addressing the actions discussed in detail in the preceding chapters, but boiled down to a simple understanding of priorities for the next two to three years. A chart that lists all of the actions in the plan accompanies the chapter with priorities indicated and the roles and responsibilities of partners identified.

Chapter 7 concludes with a discussion of how the National Heritage Area expects to measure and evaluate its work, that is, to understand its progress toward the promise of the plan and how well it has managed its funds in the public interest. The Commission is the "keeper of the flame," the organization that communicates the vision for the National Heritage Area. It must monitor implementation of the management plan, which is designed to help the region achieve the heritage area's vision and goals, and organize adjustments as circumstances and opportunities suggest.

The Robert Moses Niagara Hydroelectric Power Station in Lewiston. Photo credit: JMA, 2009

Chapter 2 – Niagara's Interpretive Presentation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area was created by Congress to recognize the national significance of the region's natural and cultural legacies and to promote the preservation and stewardship of their associated resources. Local partners envision that the National Heritage Area is a means through which regional cooperation can be fostered for the purpose of community revitalization. Interpretation and heritage tourism are central to the region's community revitalization strategy.

Niagara Falls is a world class visitor attraction. An estimated six to eight million visitors come to the American side of the Falls each year. However, few of these visitors explore beyond the immediate vicinity of the Falls, and their potential economic impacts upon local and regional communities are not fully realized. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area seeks to help partners create a world class visitor experience along the Niagara River and Gorge that will attract visitors, encourage them to explore, and provide benefits to the local and regional economy. Through the heritage area initiatives, communities will be strengthened, residents will be engaged, and the region's natural and cultural resources will be recognized, preserved, and enhanced.

Creating a world class visitor experience requires an integrated program of interpretation and heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is addressed in Chapter 3 of this management plan. This chapter outlines how the heritage area can create an interpretative presentation that engages visitors and residents in support of community goals.

2.1 Vision and Goals for Interpretation

A series of nine goals were identified for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area during planning for the management plan addressing various areas of interest and potential action. The goals are listed in Chapter 1 of the plan. The heritage area's goal for interpretation and education reads:

> **Interpretation and Education -** Assure the creation of a high quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources and environments in the Niagara region.

In the heritage area's Preferred Alternative, the following conceptual approach was developed for achieving this goal:

- Collaborate with partners in developing an interpretive framework and plan and in **networking attractions**, to reach a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the region's communities, cultures, resources, and environments.

- Identify an **interpretive hub and linkages for each of the four themes**; stimulate **coordinated landscape exhibits** for each; and support partners' related interior programming.
- **Support partners** in implementing their sites' portions of the interpretive plan, beginning with a **core program, with other experiences phased in** over time.
- **Assist local partners in establishing and supporting a central database** of materials, publications and artifacts related to interpretive subjects and **encourage scholarly research**.
- Establish the **Falls to the Fort as a regional interpretive connector** to places and programs throughout Niagara and Erie counties and the Niagara Region of Canada.
- Provide interpretive content to visitors through easily accessible **social media and other technological formats**.
- Establish a comprehensive **graphic identity**, including **signage**, **publications**, **website**, **and promotional materials**. Materials related to **each of the four themes would have identifiably distinct appearances** coordinated within the same format (using elements such as color or icons).
- Operate a **central interpretive center** with exhibits introducing the heritage area themes.
- **Plan and implement** a comprehensive system of landscape interpretive exhibits along an extensive system of trails along the Gorge and in communities.

2.1.1 Organizing the Interpretative Presentation

The conceptual approach for interpretation included in the Preferred Alternative and listed above provides the basis for the heritage area's interpretive presentation. Recommendations for organizing and implementing this conceptual approach are outlined in the following sections of this chapter. These recommendations provide a structure through which specific actions can be taken by partners for coordinated interpretation.

The recommendations are organized into (1) actions that should be undertaken heritage area-wide to support the entire interpretive presentation, (2) concepts and ideas for presentation of each of the heritage area's key interpretive themes, and (3) actions for coordinating interpretation of heritage area themes regionally at affiliated sites throughout Niagara and Erie Counties.

Heritage Area-wide Initiatives

Heritage area-wide initiatives are needed to coordinate the actions of individual partners and to present the heritage area's interpretive experience as an integrated whole. These initiatives should introduce interpretive opportunities to visitors and encourage them to explore. They should present the heritage area's themes, explain where and how interpretation is offered, provide interpretive context that highlights meaning and significance, and create interpretive linkages between the themes and stories offered at

various locations. Heritage area-wide initiatives include preparation of a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan. In general, heritage area-wide initiatives should be led by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission and its subcommittees, comprised of partnering organizations.

Presenting Heritage Area Themes

Themes are the big ideas and organizing framework within which interpretation of individual resources and stories may be presented and understood in the context of the whole. The 2005 Study Report for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area identified four primary interpretive themes that help convey the overall history and significance of the Niagara Falls region and its peoples. The four interpretive themes are:

Natural Phenomenon – the story of the Niagara region's landscape and natural history;

Tourism and Recreation – the story that tourism played in the region's development;

Power and Industry – the story of Niagara's pivotal role in the development of electricity as a power source and how it transformed twentieth century American life; and

Borderlands/Border Crossing – the story of the Niagara Frontier and the region's role as a contested borderland and boundary in which empires, nations, and peoples with conflicting perceptions and interests vied.

These four themes identified for the heritage area are intended to be broad and comprehensive so that they capture the wide range of potential stories significant to individual communities and sites. The use of these themes will help determine how interpretation will be undertaken heritage area-wide, how regional interpretation might be organized, and how linkages between sites and resources might be created. The theme Borderlands/Border Crossing is further divided into five key storylines that can be used to convey the theme and are significant stories within the region. Additional stories related to border themes could be developed. The five current storylines include:

The Western Door – the story of the Six Nations, or Haudenosaunee, in the vicinity of the Niagara River and what would become Western New York;

Clash of Empires – the story of Niagara as a key portal to the American interior, and native peoples as key regional players, in the world-wide clash of British and French empires during the mid-eighteenth century;

Revolutionary Frontier – the story of the region's experience as the British contact point with the Haudenosaunne homeland during the American Revolution;

War of 1812 – the story of international conflict and violence between cross-border neighbors in the war between Britain and the United States, and that war's impact on the Haudenosaunee; and

Underground Railroad – the story of escape to Upper Canada by African Americans fleeing slavery in the years before the Civil War.

Together, the four primary heritage area themes and the five Borderlands/Border Crossing themes encompass the range of stories upon which the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will focus. These themes are used as the organizing structure for the interpretive presentation outlined in this chapter.

Regional Collaboration
The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is envisioned as a regional initiative including Niagara and Erie Counties in their entirety. While the core of the heritage area is located along the Niagara River from just above the Falls north to Lake Ontario, linkages to communities and sites throughout the two counties provide an opportunity to strengthen regional identity and further regional collaboration. Working through interpretation, heritage tourism, historic preservation, and the conservation and stewardship of natural resources, the heritage area provides a framework through which to organize and amplify regional action. Together with our Canadian partners, the existing international regional identity can be further established and enhanced.

2.1.2 Desired Interpretive Experience

The implementation of a high quality interpretive experience is essential if the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is to achieve its core mission of engaging visitors and encouraging them to explore the Niagara River corridor and the region. The following ideas represent the desired interpretive experience that visitors should come away with after experiencing the heritage area's presentation. In planning interpretation, these ideas should be used as benchmarks in assessing whether the planned presentation is meeting the desired goals. Upon experiencing the heritage area's interpretive presentation, visitors should:

- Appreciate the range of themes for which the Niagara region is significant.
- Be able to identify at least two of the heritage area themes.
- Understand how a theme or story's significance relates to the national and international context of the time.
- Relate themes and stories to the landscape and the actual places where events occurred.
- Be able to identify four locations where historical events took place.
- Be able to envision the landscape as it existed at the time of the story being told even though the landscape may have since changed dramatically.
- Appreciate the impact a story or event had upon the lives of people, how it changed the course of events.
- See the story from the perspective of others who may have different points of view.
- Be encouraged to consider what the story means to their own lives today.
- Be stimulated to learn more, seek additional information on their own, and explore other places within the heritage area.
- Understand how the Niagara region has embraced its heritage and through it created a vision for its future.
- Will stay longer or return for another visit.

2.1.3 Guiding Principles for Interpretation

The following guiding principles are recommended to inform decision-making for interpretation at individual sites and heritage area-wide. These guiding principles are

common to most interpretive initiatives but are particularly important to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area because of the world class level of quality that is envisioned. Interpretation within the heritage area may be implemented by a variety of different partners over time and should be closely coordinated. Where heritage area support is anticipated, the heritage area's interpretive guidelines should be followed and its Interpretive Committee, discussed later in this chapter, should review proposed plans. The following principles should be helpful in such reviews.

- **Quality:** Interpretation within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should be of the highest quality in keeping with the world class reputation of the Falls. Interpretive exhibits and installations should meet the highest standards in terms of conception, design, materials, fabrication, storytelling, accessibility, and overall experience. Personal interpretive services and events should match this level of quality. Customized design guidelines for exhibits and infrastructure should be used to assist partners in meeting and maintaining quality standards. In cases where funding is being made available to a heritage area partner for projects and installations, a review of the proposed project and installations is suggested to assure consistency with heritage area goals and themes. The National Heritage Area would be able to provide design assistance and technical support to partner organizations in the development of relevant projects. Installations should be designed to complement the landscapes in which they are located. They should contribute to community enhancement for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

- **Creativity:** The heritage area should promote creativity in its interpretive exhibits, installations, and personal services while emphasizing quality. Wherever possible, creative alternatives to signage and waysides should be encouraged in conveying interpretive content. Artwork and landscape installations are particularly appropriate ways to provide interpretation while enhancing the community context. The heritage area should become known for the range and quality of its interpretive art.

- **Accuracy:** Interpretive content should be well-researched and accurate. Source material should be identified in the development of interpretive content and should be consistent with the standards used by professional historians. The extent of what is actually known and unknown should be clearly conveyed to visitors. There should be no conjecture. Sometimes, what is *not* known is extremely interesting. If stories are based upon legend, lore, or oral tradition, this should be clearly stated. The heritage area should have a review committee of professionally trained historians and interpreters to advise partners in the development of interpretation and review proposed interpretive content.

- **Authenticity of Place:** To the extent possible, each story should be told in the actual place where it happened, connecting the story directly to a place that is tangible and real. This should be done even when the place has significantly changed as compared to its historical appearance. Whenever possible, authentic physical features−buildings, roads, landscapes, and other resources−should be used to tell the stories. The scale and character of the historic landscape should be conveyed to the audience to help them better visualize and experience the

story being told. In cases where the landscape has changed, interpretation should convey its historical appearance through sketches, artwork, historic photographs, or even verbal descriptions using actual physical features for reference. In some cases, objects or 'placemakers' can be used to mark locations for reference by interpretation.

- **Experiential Learning:** People learn and remember things better when they physically do them. Interpretation should be experiential to the maximum degree possible. Communication that is visual and tied to real things and authentic places and features should be emphasized over the reading of waysides and text. Public art can be very helpful in conveying interpretive content through the senses. Walking a trail being described interpretively helps visitors experience the story through their muscles. Hearing first person stories from a living history interpreter has a stronger impact than reading text. The opportunity to actively do things should be offered whenever possible over the mere providing of information. Visitors should be encouraged to experience stories and landscapes through their senses.

- **Variety of Experiences:** Interpretive media and techniques should be designed to acknowledge different learning styles and generational differences in how information is absorbed. A variety of possible experiences should be provided in order to satisfy the interests and capabilities of different age groups, temperaments, and orientations. Options should offer varying levels of activity, timeframes, and levels of required concentration. For instance, alternative walking tours of 10 minutes, 30 minutes, and 60 minutes in length provide options for individuals with different levels of stamina or time constraints. Roving interpreters could be stationed at key places during periods of high visitation. Alternative ways to experience interpretation should be provided for individuals with physical limitations or disabilities.

- **Opportunities to Explore:** Audiences should be given opportunities to explore both in a physical sense and in terms of interpretive themes and stories. In the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, encouraging visitors to explore communities and sites from the 'Falls to the Fort' is a primary goal and is to be accomplished by making exploration easy and by providing rewarding experiences. Tempting leads and interpretive connections should invite visitors to move from place to place. Themes and stories should be presented in ways that help visitors draw connections, spark interests, and encourage further investigation. Revelations and surprises should be incorporated into the experience. The information and tools needed to follow through on interests should be available at every turn.

- **Context:** Each story being told should be connected to the broader historical context using heritage area themes. Stories should be used to illustrate themes and relate to the bigger picture in ways that make them immediate and understandable. The historical context surrounding each story should be clearly communicated in broad strokes that are accurate but easily grasped. Through the context, connections can be drawn between interpretive content offered at different locations.

- **Significance and Meanings:** Interpretation is more than the mere reciting of facts. Storytelling conveys facts, but interpretation goes beyond by drawing connections from a story and conveying significance and meaning to its audience. Good storytelling can be interesting, but it only becomes meaningful when it makes a larger point or touches a larger truth. In developing interpretive content, each story should be examined for its significance. Why is this history relevant to us today? Each story or interpretive exhibit should have a key message it is intended to convey. The story's significance or message should be communicated to the audience in a way that helps them connect it to their own life experiences. Through this connection, we hope to evoke realizations and affect how those in the audience may think or act regarding the subject. If we succeed, the interpretive experience will have been meaningful.

- **Multiple Points of View:** Visitors should be offered stories from multiple points of view and be led to appreciate how stories may hold multiple meanings. Varying perspectives should be presented in their historical context so we appreciate how people from diverse groups saw things differently. Visitors should not be told what to think but should be allowed to make their own decisions and draw their own conclusions.

- **Shared Human Experience:** Interpretation should be provided in ways that help audiences identify with it and relate it to experiences in their own lives. Using the authentic stories of real people in their own words in the actual places where events occurred should be encouraged wherever possible. The expression of universal concepts such as love, loss, satisfaction, anxiety, pride, uncertainty, etc. with which everyone can empathize and relate to in their own lives helps forge a personal connection to a story.

- **Opportunities to Engage and Support:** Whenever appropriate, audiences should be made aware of the heritage area's vision and mission and be offered the opportunity to engage in supporting activities and initiatives. In the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, community revitalization is a major goal. Many of the heritage area's stories relate to changes that have occurred to the landscapes, communities, and peoples of the region, some of which had undesired or unpleasant consequences. The lessons we learn from them have meaning for the future.

2.1.4 Organizing for Implementation

As suggested in section 2.1.1 above, the heritage area interpretive presentation is organized into three broad parts: (1) the heritage area-wide presentation, (2) presentation of each of the key interpretive themes, and (3) interpretive regional connections to other sites in Niagara and Erie Counties. A comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan will provide the framework for the implementation of interpretive initiatives. Chapter 7 of this plan, *Management, Implementation & Business Plan*, addresses how the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area as a whole is organized for implementation.

From an interpretive perspective, it is anticipated that the heritage area's 'coordinating entity,' the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission or its eventual successor

organization, will have responsibility for implementing most elements of the heritage area-wide presentation. As discussed in section 2.2 below, the heritage area-wide presentation is expected to include such tasks as creating a heritage area website and media experience, publications, living history and interpretive guide services, and other initiatives that coordinate and support the heritage area presentation as a whole. It includes preparation of a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan. Some tasks might be undertaken by partners specializing in the area of concern, such as having the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation implement initiatives involving marketing and promotion. However in general, the Commission through its subcommittees and staff is expected to lead and coordinate most heritage area-wide initiatives.

The presentation of the heritage area's key interpretive themes will be implemented primarily through collaboration between the Commission and selected partners associated with each theme and/or the places where those themes are presented in accordance with the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has relatively few locations where interior exhibits are offered related to its interpretive themes. Among the different partners and visitor attractions that do offer interior exhibits are the State Park's Visitors Center and Discovery Center, Power Vista, Castellani Art Museum, Customs House, Lewiston Museum, Town of Porter Historical Museum, and Old Fort Niagara. While the heritage area presentation will feature and coordinate with these attractions and their interior exhibits, much of the heritage area's interpretive presentation will be implemented using outdoor landscape exhibits in the places most directly associated with each individual theme.

The following sections of this chapter outline concepts and ideas for how each heritage area theme and storyline might be presented, including locations where interpretation could be featured. Specific ideas cited for interpretation are intended as examples to demonstrate the kinds of initiatives that could be undertaken and to encourage creative thought. It is anticipated that some of these existing ideas will be further developed for implementation and that new ideas will be introduced for consideration as planning and implementation proceed. The preparation of the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan is discussed in section 2.3 below and will establish and describe interpretive initiatives and projects to be undertaken.

Phasing will be required in the implementation of interpretive initiatives and projects and will be addressed in the heritage area's interpretive plan. The Commission through its subcommittees and staff should be responsible for coordinating implementation, even though some actual implementation projects may be the responsibility of partners.

Individual implementation projects may be costly both because of the level of quality to which the heritage area aspires and because landscape installations undertaken in publicly owned locations may require public design, compliance, and procurement processes. For these reasons, large scale implementation projects may take time to complete. Where possible, initial steps toward implementation should favor less costly projects that can be undertaken in the short term. Experimentation to see what works should also be a priority before large investments are made. In any case, the heritage area should not undertake or promote interpretation that does not meet the quality standards that assure visitors have a satisfying experience.

Encouraging Quality through Planning and Review

Even with the development of a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan as outlined in section 2.3 below, design development and additional detail will be required for implementation. In order to promote the level of quality needed to attract visitors, a process of design review will be needed for implementation of interpretive projects. Quality standards for attractions and visitor services are outlined in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*. An additional process is necessary specifically for interpretive initiatives, many of which will be implemented not at attractions but outdoors on publicly owned lands.

Interpretive projects should be identified, conceived, prioritized, and planned based upon the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan and implemented through a heritage area planning process for interpretation and visitor experience. Partners and interested individuals should be engaged early for input as ideas are being developed. Where projects are the initiatives of partners, the participation of the National Heritage Area should be sought early, and heritage area encouragement and support should be provided.

As individual projects are undertaken, implementation plans should be prepared to the appropriate level of detail describing the project and its position and role within the heritage area's overall interpretive presentation. Projects involving heritage area funding, support, or promotion should go through a heritage area review and approval process for quality control prior to implementation.

Implementation plans for specific projects should be prepared at the conceptual or schematic stage of design documentation. They should be reviewed by the heritage area's Interpretive Committee for consistency with the heritage area interpretive plan, program, and guidelines. Heritage area affiliated projects should not proceed until the committee's approval has been obtained. Planning requirements should be flexible, constructive, and tailored to the nature and circumstances of the project. They need not be complicated or burdensome. In general, implementation plans should provide the following information.

- Partners undertaking the implementation project;
- Overall project concept and objectives;
- Location and site plan;
- Intended audiences;
- Consistency with the heritage area's interpretive plan and guidelines;
- Heritage area themes and sub-themes being interpreted;
- Interpretive media to be used;
- Key interpretive message for each exhibit;
- Authenticity and accuracy of interpretive content;
- Exhibit or installation designs;
- Consistency of the physical design of the exhibit or installation with established heritage area or partnership formats and design guidelines;
- Supporting landscape infrastructure, if any;
- Interpretive connections to other sites and partners;
- Estimated project costs.

Quality Standards and Assessment
Chapter 3 of this management plan, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*, discusses creation of a two-level quality standards program for attractions, events, and visitor services. This program is intended to include the quality standards for personal and non-personal interpretation offered at interpretive sites and attractions. As discussed in Chapter 3, benefits of participation in the quality standards program could include the National Heritage Area's 'mark of quality,' networking opportunities, volunteer assistance, heritage area grants, technical assistance, and marketing.

The heritage area's Interpretive Committee, discussed in the following section, should have the responsibility of guiding the development of quality standards for interpretation. In implementing the idea of visitor readiness assessments as a benefit to partners, as discussed in Chapter 3, specific assessments could be offered with respect to interpretive experience. Experts in interpretive programming could be made available to sites and staff as a form of technical assistance for program evaluation, program development, and training.

2.2 The Heritage Area-wide Presentation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area interpretive presentation should create a range of interpretive experiences designed to encourage visitors to explore from the Falls to the Fort. The presentation should combine existing interpretation offered at visitor attractions with new landscape interpretation to be offered at locations within communities and all along the river corridor. This coordinated, high quality interpretive presentation will complement the level of quality envisioned for the Niagara Experience Center.

Within the City of Niagara Falls, the interpretive presentation should directly support the city's Comprehensive Plan by interpreting the city's history, enhancing public spaces, and encouraging visitors to explore the city, particularly the Niagara River waterfront, Falls Precinct, Cultural District, Third Street Precinct, Pine Avenue, and Main Street. Downriver, the interpretive presentation should support implementation of community and Niagara River Greenway visions of linking communities and open space, enhancing community character, and supporting community downtown districts.

Heritage area-wide interpretive initiatives should coordinate and support individual projects to be undertaken at locations along the river corridor in accordance with the heritage area's interpretive plan. Heritage area-wide initiatives should be led by the heritage area's coordinating entity, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission or its successor organization, and its subcommittees and staff.

2.2.1 Implement a Heritage Area-wide Interpretive Presentation
The heritage area should implement an interpretive presentation from the Falls to the Fort based upon a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan, discussed in section 2.3 below. Each of the heritage area's key themes and storylines should be interpreted and woven together into a coordinated and unified interpretive presentation.

For each of the interpretive themes, potential projects should be identified, prioritized, and organized based upon:

1. the ability of the project to present the theme and its key stories to visitors,
2. the timing within which the project can be implemented,
3. the capability of the heritage area and its partners to implement the project,
4. cost and the availability of funding, and
5. other potential issues and benefits particular to the project.

Partners who should be involved in the implementation of each project should be identified and engaged. Sources of funding for implementation should be secured, and a process for implementation developed and scheduled. An implementation plan should be prepared for each interpretive project to be implemented in accordance with the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan.

An Interpretive Committee should be created to guide the National Heritage Area's interpretive initiatives. Chapter 7 of the management plan, *Management, Implementation, & Business Plan*, outlines the management structure for the heritage area, including creation of an Interpretive Committee. As envisioned, the Interpretive Committee should be led by Commission members and include representatives from partnering organizations, specifically individuals with professional-level experience in interpretation, public history, local history, and visitor experience.

The Interpretive Committee will be asked to oversee preparation of the comprehensive interpretive plan and the subsequent implementation of interpretive initiatives that the National Heritage Area leads or that are undertaken by partners with heritage area support. The role of the committee will be to:

- Guide the interpretive planning and implementation process;
- Make sure that the appropriate partners are engaged or consulted in the process;
- Guide interpretive approach, format, communication, and quality;
- Assure the accuracy of interpretive content; and
- Facilitate creation of a high-quality visitor experience.

ACTION: Create an Interpretive Committee as a committee of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission to guide heritage area interpretive initiatives.

ACTION: Organize and implement a process for identifying, prioritizing, and phasing of heritage area interpretive projects in accordance with the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan, discussed in section 2.3 below.

ACTION: Organize and implement a process for the preparation and review of implementation plans for interpretive projects being undertaken with heritage area organization, funding, or support.

ACTION: Develop and adopt criteria for a quality standards program as discussed in Chapter 3 to include interpretation with benefits such as the availability of grants and technical assistance.

2.2.2 Research and Documentation

In planning for the heritage area, it has been apparent that there is a lack of published histories or historical information that is readily available to the public. This seems surprising given the international recognition and historical significance of Niagara Falls. A few books have been written on the history of the city and Falls, but these are largely popular histories oriented toward entertainment rather than history. Pamphlets have been published on aspects of the region's history and sold in visitor centers and gift shops, but they are limited in the range and detail of subject matter. High quality published material on some subjects is completely lacking.

The history of Niagara Falls and the river corridor is well known to local historians. A great deal of primary and secondary historical information is housed in the Niagara Falls Public Library's Local History Department, a research facility featuring an extensive collection of books, photographs, maps, newspapers, videotapes, scrapbooks, and clipping files about Niagara Falls. Despite the extent and significance of its collection, the Local History Department is under-funded and open only six hours a week. Local historians note that much of the collected material is not yet inventoried or sorted.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should provide leadership in supporting archives on Niagara Falls history, sponsoring research, and making historical information publicly available. The Preferred Alternative states that the heritage area should "assist local partners in establishing and supporting a central database of materials, publications and artifacts related to interpretive subjects and encourage scholarly research."

Consultation should be undertaken with all of the regional archives, including the Niagara County Historical Society, Historical Association of Lewiston, Town of Porter Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, Niagara University, University at Buffalo, New York State Archives, and others as appropriate. It has been proposed that the Niagara Experience Center, which is being developed by a separate non-profit organization, become a major center for study of the region and for a regional archive. This idea should be developed as planning for the Experience Center proceeds in consultation with other existing archives. It is possible that a network of archives could be created, such as a system of libraries, with the future Niagara Experience Center playing a leadership role. Collections at all of the regional archives should be inventoried and coordinated in a single database available to all, perhaps using the internet.

The future roles and relationships between regional archives, including the Niagara Experience Center should be reviewed. The Niagara Falls Public Library's Local History Department should continue to be the central archive and repository for historical information and archival collections on the Niagara Falls region. A needs assessment should be undertaken to determine how best to support the library and its staff and to inventory, care for its collection, and make it more widely available. Based upon the assessment, a plan should be developed that can be phased in over time, and a regular funding stream should be established for its implementation.

The plan should address undertaking a comprehensive inventory of the library's existing collection, appropriate conservation and care of the collection, preparation of a publicly accessible bibliography, and increased public access. Additional primary

historical materials that might be available within the region should be identified and steps taken for their preservation. Collections within the New York state archives should be recorded. Information on the library's collection should be made available online. At a minimum, an annotated bibliography with descriptions of materials in the collection should be posted. Over time, key items within the collection should be digitized and made available.

ACTION: Consult with existing regional archives on an approach for creating and supporting a central single archive on the history and culture of Niagara Falls and the lower river as well as a network of regional archives working in collaboration.

ACTION: Collaborate with the Niagara Falls Public Library in preparing and implementing a plan to support the library as a central archive and repository for historical information and collections on the Niagara Falls region.

ACTION: Create a network of regional archives at existing libraries, historical societies, and other sites. Outline the roles that existing archives are willing and capable of playing in the vision for a collaborative regional archival network.

ACTION: Undertake mutually agreed-upon actions to strengthen and support the network of regional archives including such projects as completing an inventory and review of documents, processes for care of archives, creating a bibliography and summary of documents, and making archives accessible, including posting of information online.

ACTION: Work with the board and planners of the Niagara Experience Center on its possible role as a central archival resource working in collaboration with the regional archival network.

The heritage area should collaborate with the Niagara County Historical Society, Niagara University, Niagara County Community College, Historical Association of Lewiston, Town of Porter Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, county and municipal historians, and others as appropriate in developing a research program for local history. A Committee of Historians should be created to advise the heritage area on historical subjects and issues related to research. A subgroup of the Committee could serve as a resource to assist the Interpretive Committee in reviewing the accuracy of interpretive content prepared for heritage area interpretive exhibits. Minimum credentials for committee members should be established. The Committee should include both subject matter experts to review the accuracy of content as well as experienced interpreters to address how the content is presented. All exhibits implemented under the heritage area program and with heritage area support should undergo Committee review for the accuracy of interpretation.

ACTION: Establish a Committee of Historians to advise the heritage area on historical subjects and issues related to research.

The Committee of Historians should oversee the development or adoption of a research protocol to guide historians undertaking research on behalf of the heritage area. The

research protocol should outline standards and guidelines for undertaking research, identifying source information, using electronic formats, and presentation of research papers. The protocol should follow the standards of the historical profession.

ACTION: Develop or adopt a research protocol to guide historians undertaking research on behalf of the heritage area and its partners.

The heritage area and its partners should implement a research program using professional historians, local avocational historians, and students. Through the library and historical society, a bibliography of existing histories and research papers should be compiled. Historic context statements should be prepared on primary topics to help guide research and to provide an historical overview for detailed subject matter. Gaps in research should be identified in a catalogue of research needs. Gaps in research may exist both due to a lack of research and the developing quality of existing research. Priorities for research should be established and specific research problems and topics identified and described.

The heritage area should sponsor a long term program of ongoing research using professional and qualified avocational historians and concentrating upon context statements, primary research topics, and information needed to support interpretation. The historical societies should be encouraged to engage and coordinate local avocational historians in assisting with the heritage area research program. The Niagara County Community College and Niagara University should be encouraged to develop a regular program of student research on specific detailed topics of interest. Student research should be mentored and publicly acknowledged to help make it a meaningful and rewarding experience. A similar program should be developed for high school and middle school honors students as part of the heritage area's engagement of local youth.

ACTION: Develop and implement a coordinated, long term program of research into the history of the Niagara Falls region through a collaboration of partnering organizations. Organize, coordinate, and support research by professional historians, local avocational historians, and students.

As part of a broader strategy of communications, the heritage area should encourage the publication of new books and articles on Niagara Falls history. Consideration should be given to undertaking publication of a comprehensive history of Niagara Falls which could be divided into several volumes and accompanied by a video documentary. Relationships should be developed with historical magazines such as *Smithsonian*, *American Heritage*, and *American History* so that articles on various aspects of Niagara Falls history can be featured in magazines and on websites on a regular basis. Books, ebooks, and articles should be well illustrated with historical sketches, photographs, and maps. The heritage area's program of research can serve as an incubator for such articles.

ACTION: As part of a broader communications plan, encourage the publication of new books and articles on Niagara Falls history.

2.2.3 Heritage Area Identity

The identity and brand to be used by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area supports interpretation by creating a visual impression with visitors that is recognizable and

immediately communicates a sense of quality and expectation. Heritage area identity and branding is discussed in Chapter 3 of this plan, *Niagara's Visitor Experience,* including recommendations for the use of the heritage area brand as a means of establishing standards of quality.

From an interpretive perspective, the heritage area's identity should be used for design elements associated with interpretive exhibits, wayfinding, publications, website, and others media formats and materials presenting interpretive content. Design associated with the heritage area's identity and brand should be coordinated with signage design being implemented by the Niagara River Greenway. As this management plan is being prepared, wayfinding signage for Niagara Falls State Park is being designed consistent with the design of wayfinding signage being installed at Greenway sites in Buffalo and Erie County. As part of the heritage area identity, wayfinding signage, interpretive exhibit carriers, and graphic formats that are compatible with the state parks and Greenway designs should be developed.

ACTION: Incorporate interpretive elements such as exhibit carriers, kiosks, identity signage, wayfinding signage, and graphic formats in the family of items that are part of the heritage area identity and brand. Develop design guidelines and guidelines for usage for a family of exhibit carriers, kiosks, signage types, and graphic formats for use throughout the heritage area.

ACTION: Use the heritage area's identity and design elements to convey the level of quality that can be expected from heritage area interpretive presentations.

2.2.4 Heritage Area Publications

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should prepare a family of coordinated interpretive publications to support presentation of the heritage area's interpretive themes and stories to visitors. The family of publications should use the heritage area's graphic identity, should be available for downloading from the heritage area website, and should be available through and supplemented by interpretive content provided in other media formats. All publications may be produced in both print and electronic formats.

The following range of publications is suggested for consideration. Publications prepared by partners such as Old Fort Niagara on specific topics should also be included and promoted. Additional publications and formats should be considered, tested, supported, and developed over time.

- **Regional interpretive brochure** introducing the heritage area from a regional perspective and connecting the bounded portion of the heritage area along the river and falls to thematically related sites in other portions of Niagara and Erie Counties.
- **Heritage area brochure** presenting the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area within its bounded area, introducing its interpretive themes, and suggesting opportunities for visitors to explore.
- **Large fold-out map** of the heritage area from LaSalle along the Upper Niagara River to Old Fort Niagara depicting the landscape, communities, trails, walking tours, visitor facilities, and locations where interpretation is offered. Interpretive

content supporting presentations at sites and within the landscape should also be presented on the map.

- **Regional interpretive guide** as a pamphlet or fold-out map featuring tours and itineraries related to heritage area themes connecting sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.
- **Individual brochures for each theme** presenting the theme along with related stories and subject matter. Each brochure should include a map showing the places where site or landscape interpretation of that theme is offered. Brochures should focus upon the river and falls but also identify thematically related sites in Niagara and Erie Counties.
- **Interpretive guides for each theme** should be prepared presenting interpretative content in additional detail. *The Power Trail,Seige-1759, The Campaign Against Niagara,* and *A History and Guide to Old Fort Niagara* are examples of guides that could be used and that could serve as models for guides developed for other themes and subjects.
- **Junior Rangers Booklet** supporting the heritage area's Junior Ranger Program and providing activities and interpretive content for young people.
- **Audio and video presentations** on subjects related to various heritage area themes.
- **Trails guide** for the walking and hiking trails along the Niagara River and Gorge from LaSalle to the Fort. The state park has an existing brochure for the Niagara Gorge trail system, but a more extensive trail guide should be prepared that maps the landscape and trails in detail, provides information for hikers, and presents interpretation of the natural history and ecosystems along the Niagara River and Gorge. The trails guide should connect to trails and walks within the city and in the communities of Lewiston and Youngstown.
- **Media Applications** should be used to make interpretive content and orientation information available in as many ways as possible using applications, podcasts, Facebook, and other social media.

ACTION: Create a family of coordinated interpretive publications to support presentation of the heritage area's interpretive themes and stories to visitors. The family of publications may include a variety of media and graphic formats and should be introduced over time beginning with the publications that will be most useful to visitors.

ACTION: Coordinate the family of interpretive publications with those of partnering sites and organizations that interpret heritage area themes.

2.2.5 Heritage Area Media Experience

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should create a state-of-the-art media experience that presents the heritage area, its resources, and its opportunities in a variety of user friendly media formats. The media presentation could be a cyberspace version of the Niagara Experience Center and could be an early action undertaken as a collaboration of the Commission, NEC, and heritage area partners.

A new Niagara Falls National Heritage Area website should be the foundation of the media experience and serve as a portal to and from other media formats and a launching point for features, services, and utilities to be developed. The website and its related media formats should focus upon visitor information, opportunities for exploration, and interpretive content. Partnership, management, historic preservation, and stewardship interests of the heritage area should also be met. The website and media should use the heritage area's graphic identity and brand and is further discussed in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*.

There are a number of existing websites that feature Niagara Falls and its visitor attractions including those for the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC), Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, state parks, and individual attractions. In addition, the National Park Service manages a website at www.nps.gov/nifa featuring the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. This website is well designed and can continue to be used, though as part of a government system it has some limitations. The NPS website should link closely to a new heritage area website and media to be created by the Commission and heritage area partners.

The heritage area media experience should not compete with the existing websites of partners but should complement and link with them. Unlike existing websites, the heritage area media experience is less about individual attractions and services and more about the heritage area's themes, landscapes, and communities. The heritage area's principal mission is to 1) present the larger story of Niagara Falls as represented through its interpretive themes, 2) orient visitors to opportunities, and 3) encourage visitors to explore when they come. Good, solid orientation materials are a necessity for the heritage area media in helping visitors understand the heritage area's small size and ease of accessibility.

Website and media interpretation should engage potential visitors and encourage them to visit in new ways. Interpretation should be used as the website's basic organizing concept. The media should present Niagara's themes and stories, clearly stating its significance on its home page and weaving its stories throughout subsequent sections. Each key interpretive theme should be presented along with the places where the theme is represented and interpreted within the heritage area.

The heritage area media experience should be a virtual/interactive museum and information center. Based in the new website, it should make use of the latest social media and smartphone technologies and be frequently updated. Potential visitors should be able to explore the heritage area through a series of virtual tours using video and animated experiences similar to those to be featured in the Niagara Experience Center.

Suggested driving, biking, and walking tours should be presented along with maps, GPS technologies, visitor information, and interpretive content. Historic photographs and historic maps keyed to specific places should be liberally used for illustration. Podcasts and audio tours should be provided accessible and downloadable to various media formats for use during visits. Applications for smartphones should be developed and coordinated with the website and social media to provide visitor information, maps, written and audio tours, and interpretive content. Information about the heritage area's transportation network should be featured.

The heritage area landscape should be presented in a holistic fashion, delineating its organizing elements and emphasizing linkages and connections. Segments of the landscape could be detailed to facilitate exploration by visitors: LaSalle, the upper river, the Falls and Falls Street, the Gorge, Power Vista, greater Lewiston, Youngstown and Old Fort Niagara, regional connections. Opportunities for exploration such as trails, walks, drives, landscape features, landscape exhibits, attractions, and community facilities should be clearly presented. Media presentations could be connected to onsite interactive exhibits. Locations where visitor services can be found, such as Lower Falls Street, Third Street, Lewiston, and Youngstown, should be highlighted, but detailed information on lodging, dining, and visitor services should be referred to the NTCC and Niagara River Region websites and media.

Website links to the Niagara Falls Public Library, Niagara County Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, Castellani Art Museum, and other partners should be made to provide access to research papers and studies on Niagara Falls history for students and individuals seeking detailed information. Access to information on environmental topics should be organized through other partners, such as the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area website should be used as an interpretive medium to provide rich content that will inform internet visitors about the history of the region.

ACTION: Create a heritage area website to present the Niagara Falls story as represented through its interpretive themes and to encourage visitors to explore when they come.

ACTION: Create a heritage area media experience as a virtual/interactive museum and information center. A cyberspace version of the Niagara Experience Center, the state-of-the-art media experience should present the heritage area, its resources, and its opportunities in a variety of user friendly media formats. Use the media experience to provide detailed information that will facilitate orientation and exploration, including maps, tours, guides, and interpretive content.

ACTION: Coordinate content and use of the new heritage area website and media with that of the National Park Service website so that the two complement and are consistent with each other.

ACTION: Create podcasts and audio and video tours that can be downloaded from the website and other media formats.

ACTION: Develop creative, fun, and user friendly smartphone and social media applications to provide a wide range of information and interpretive content for visitors.

ACTION: Use the heritage area website and media formats to provide access to articles, research papers, historic maps, and photographs for use by students and others seeking detailed information about Niagara Falls, its history, and its landscape.

2.2.6 Interpretive Center and Orientation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should create a network of facilities introducing visitors to heritage area themes and stories and orienting them toward interpretive opportunities within the heritage area's landscapes and communities.

The premier interpretive facility for the heritage area should be the planned Niagara Experience Center, a world class regional attraction to be located adjacent to Niagara Falls State Park. The Niagara Experience Center is being undertaken by Niagara Experience Center, Inc., an independent non-profit organization with a Board of Directors of cultural, educational, and civic leaders from the regional community. The Experience Center will feature the latest in immersive 'experience design' and yet be grounded in scholarship and authenticity. It is planned to include a scholarly research center and archive, mentioned above. Interpretively, the Niagara Experience Center will introduce the heritage area's principal themes, dramatically illustrate the context for what we see today, and serve as the gateway to other interpretive opportunities, encouraging visitors to explore the river corridor and experience the authentic landscapes it interprets.

The Niagara Experience Center will be the focal point of a re-envisioned downtown as outlined in the City of Niagara Falls Comprehensive Plan. Planning for the Experience Center is underway, and it has been identified as a featured project in New York's 2011 *Western New York Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan*. Phase 1 of the project includes site acquisition, design, and site preparation. Implementation of the Niagara Experience Center is a long-term project that will require significant fundraising and community support. The heritage area should closely coordinate with, partner with, and support its development.

For the medium term, the heritage area should consider developing an interim Interpretive Center in the vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard. The interim Interpretive Center could be located at a partnering site such as the Niagara USA Official Visitor Center, Niagara Falls Conference and Event Center, or other venue, or it could be located in a rental space. Creation of an interim Interpretive Center should not compete or interfere with development of the Niagara Experience Center. The interim Interpretive Center should feature high quality interpretive exhibits that introduce the heritage area's key themes and stories and encourage visitors to explore the authentic places along the river corridor where those themes are presented and interpreted in more detail.

The Interpretive Center should also serve as a transportation hub, providing visitors access to walking and hiking trails, bicycles and biking trails, rental cars, driving routes, guided tours, and visitor shuttles serving the heritage area corridor. While the Interpretive Center will provide information about exploring the heritage area, it will not focus upon other types of visitor attractions and services and is not a replacement for the existing visitor center.

Working with community partners, identify locations in Lewiston and Youngstown that can serve as orientation centers for the heritage area. As outlined in Chapter 3, orientation centers should offer brochure racks and orientation exhibits with visitor information, focusing upon local visitor opportunities and relating them to the heritage area as a whole. The orientation centers should also feature interpretive exhibits introducing

heritage area themes, particularly those themes of local significance. These community orientation centers are anticipated to be located in partners' facilities and staffed by partnering organizations.

In addition to the Interpretation Center in Niagara Falls and two orientation centers in Lewiston and Youngstown, outdoor orientation exhibits or kiosks should be installed at key locations along the entire length of the heritage area, from LaSalle on the south to Old Fort Niagara on the north. The size and scope of the orientation exhibits may vary depending upon the location. The exhibits should be a component of the heritage area's identity, branding, and signage standards. Each exhibit should feature a map of the heritage area showing trails and linkages, and identifying interpretive opportunities. The heritage area's interpretive themes should be introduced, and detailed information may be provided on visitor opportunities in the vicinity. Orientation exhibits should be located outside of the Interpretive Center, orientation centers, and primary visitor attractions to serve visitors during times when the facilities are closed.

ACTION: Create a network of facilities introducing visitors to heritage area themes and stories and orienting them toward interpretive opportunities within the heritage area's landscapes and communities.

ACTION: Collaborate with partners in developing a primary Interpretive Center adjacent to Niagara Falls State Park to attract visitors and encourage them to explore the river corridor. Over the long term, work to develop the Niagara Experience Center as the primary interpretive center.

ACTION: In the interim, a smaller Interpretive Center should be created in the vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard.

ACTION: Working with community partners, establish orientation centers in Lewiston and Youngstown presenting the heritage area, introducing interpretive themes, and orienting visitors to interpretive opportunities.

ACTION: Create outdoor orientation exhibits or kiosks at key locations along the river corridor presenting the heritage area, introducing its themes, and orienting visitors to interpretive opportunities.

2.2.7 Interpretive Guides and Living History

A means of providing a high quality interpretive experience is through personal interpretation offered by experienced guides and living history interpreters. Several partners within the heritage area currently feature personal interpretation. Old Fort Niagara, with its dramatic stories of military life and action, uses living history interpreters in military, civilian, and Native American character to provide memorable experiences for visitors. Niagara Falls State Park employs costumed interpreters depicting Nicola Testa and daredevils Annie Edson Taylor and The Great Blondin. The Lewiston Council of the Arts offers its popular Marble Orchard Ghost Walks featuring lively characters from the community's past. Local tour operators use local historians and themed interpreters as step-on guides for visiting tour buses. In collaboration with these and other partners, the heritage area should develop an organized group of guides and living history interpreters that can work within the heritage area.

A Certified Guides Program should be developed as a component of the Ambassador Program discussed in Chapter 3. Individuals who wish to become certified guides should undergo training and be provided with an historical interpretative manual on themes and stories associated with the heritage area and its sites. Once the individuals pass a test on their knowledge of interpretive content and hospitality skills, they would become certified heritage area guides and be provided with certification documents, badges, jackets, or other identifiable items. The heritage area and its partners would call upon the guides to provide interpretive services at sites, during events, as step-on guides, to groups, and as personal services to visitors. Guides could be employed at the heritage area's Interpretive Center and their services could be marketed and made available to visitors, tour groups, and tour operators.

The services of qualified Living History Interpreters could be organized through partnering sites, local acting groups, or re-enacting organizations, or they could be organized by retaining interpreters on an individual basis. The program should collaborate with but not interfere with existing living history arrangements at sites such as Old Fort Niagara. Many Living History Interpreters provide their own authentic costumes and are qualified to represent their character within the context of the heritage area's themes and stories. The heritage area's Interpretive Committee, however, should designate individuals to oversee quality control with respect to authenticity and interpretive capabilities. It may be desirable to develop a costume collection which Living History Interpreters can use. Similar to the Certified Guides, the Living History Interpreters would be called upon to provide interpretive services related to their characters at sites, during events, as step-on guides, to groups, and as personal services to visitors.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should become renowned for the organization, scope, and quality of its Certified Guide and Living History Programs. Because personal interpretive services require no infrastructure, it is a step that can be taken for early implementation to begin creating an engaging and high quality heritage area-wide interpretive experience.

ACTION: Create a Certified Guides Program of qualified individuals who can serve as guides to the heritage area and provide high quality interpretation in a variety of formats for visitors. Develop background materials, a certification process, and ongoing quality control measures to assure the level of quality desired.

ACTION: Work with partnering organizations to create a qualified troupe of Living History Interpreters representing heritage area themes and stories and who can perform and animate sites and locations throughout the heritage area. Develop background materials, costume support, a certification process, and ongoing quality control measures to assure the level of quality desired.

2.2.8 Public Art

Public art should play a central role in the interpretive experience of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and should be organized in collaboration with the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center. The heritage area should become known for the manner and extent in which art is used to interpret themes and stories and to enhance community landscapes. The National Heritage Area should also support community initiatives for public art as community enhancements beyond the heritage area's interpretive goals.

As a component of the heritage area's identity and brand, a family of custom designed markers, exhibit carriers, kiosks, and signage types should be created for use throughout the heritage area as discussed in Section 2.2.3, *Heritage Area Identity*, above.. Design guidelines and standards should be created for the family of elements, which should have a high standard of design and craftsmanship and convey a sense of public art. As discussed above and in Chapter 3 relative to wayfinding, the design standards should be compatible with other related signage and wayfinding initiatives, such as those implemented by the Greenway and state parks, and should be distinctive to the heritage area. Interpretive exhibits and signage sponsored, supported, or promoted by the heritage area should be implemented using the heritage area design standards and guidelines.

Landscape interpretation of heritage area themes as presented below in this chapter should be undertaken through the installation of interpretive artwork, supplementing the use of more traditional exhibits, to the maximum extent possible. Public art has the ability to convey interpretive meaning simply through its visual character and without the use of words and text. When combined with more traditional exhibits, it provides a unique and powerful interpretive experience that will set the Niagara presentation apart and support its world class reputation.

Public art can provide landscape enhancement to streetscapes, parks, and other public spaces. It can be designed to attract attention and draw visitors from a distance or to blend into a landscape context as a delightful discovery. Businesses can use interpretive artwork outside and inside their establishments to coordinate with and support the heritage area experience.

The character and appearance of the heritage area landscape is different than it was during many of the historical periods being interpreted through heritage area themes. For instance, the location and extent of the hydraulic canal and the power plant and industries it served is difficult to envision today. Artwork can be used in the contemporary landscape as 'placemakers' or markers to delineate the location and layout of lost features such as the canal so that visitors can visualize and feel their physical presence and appreciate their scale and relationships. Public art is a means through which interpretive content can be conveyed in a unique fashion which enhances the landscape and limits the need for signage.

ACTION: Use public art to convey interpretive content in heritage area landscape presentations to the maximum extent possible.

ACTION: As a component of the heritage area's brand and identity, design guidelines for the family of exhibit carriers, kiosks, and signage types should have a high level of design quality conveying a sense of public art throughout the heritage area.

ACTION: Prepare a comprehensive plan outlining opportunities for public art allowing for targeting of projects and attraction of artists. Include public art in interpretive plans prepared for exhibit presentations.

ACTION: Use public art as 'placemakers' within the landscape to support interpretation and help visitors visualize the location, extent, and character of landscape features that are no longer existing.

ACTION: Support community initiatives for public art as community enhancements beyond the heritage area's interpretive goals.

2.2.9 Programming and Events

Public programming and events play an important role in attracting visitors to Niagara Falls communities and attractions. The City of Niagara Falls and USA Niagara sponsor a year-long series of events along Old Falls Street that are managed under contract by Global Spectrum. The Village of Lewiston hosts a full schedule of public events in its Center Street business district many weekends. Artpark and Company, Inc. in Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park, adjacent to Lewiston, is renowned for its concerts, shows, and family events. A new outdoor amphitheater is planned that will improve facilities and services for visitors. Old Fort Niagara presents a series of high quality public events related to its historical interpretation during the visitor season.

The heritage area should collaborate closely with communities and attractions to support, enhance, and help coordinate events heritage area-wide. The heritage area should serve as a forum for coordinating and scheduling events so that they expand opportunities, reinforce each other, and limit unnecessary conflicts and competition. The heritage area can play a strong role in enhancing events through grants and interpretive programming. Regionally, the heritage area should coordinate with communities, organizations, and attractions to coordinate and promote events and public programming.

ACTION: Support interpretive programming offered by partnering communities and sites through a competitive interpretive programming and events matching grant program. Use the grants program to encourage and support high standards of quality.

ACTION: Work with partnering communities and sites to coordinate a heritage area-wide calendar of events that creates synergism, limits undesired competition, and encourages exploration and visitation throughout the corridor.

ACTION: Collaborate with partners on a regional basis to coordinate and promote events for visitors in Niagara and Erie Counties based upon heritage area related themes.

2.3 Heritage Area Interpretive Plan

Following adoption of this management plan, the next step toward implementation of the heritage area interpretive presentation will be the preparation of a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan. The purposes of the comprehensive interpretive plan are to identify the best locations and means through which the heritage area stories will be told and to detail how phased implementation will be undertaken.

The interpretive plan will demonstrate how heritage area themes and stories will be woven together in a unified presentation both in terms of what is presented and how it is experienced. The plan will build upon the information and ideas included in this management plan and will be inspired by the world class concepts envisioned for the Niagara Experience Center as applied to sites, landscapes, and communities throughout the heritage area.

The process of preparing the interpretive plan will be led by the Commission's Interpretive Committee and staff. A qualified interpretive planning and exhibit design firm will be retained to undertake the work. A wide range of heritage area partners will be involved in the project, incorporating existing interpretive initiatives into the plan and making use of the expertise of partners in telling the region's stories. The public will be engaged in the planning process through workshops and open houses where ideas will be outlined and input received. Opportunities will be provided for participation by all Commission members, and the Commission will make final decisions regarding the plan.

The comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan will be comprised of the following elements:

1. Expanding upon the ideas outlined in sections 2.3 though 2.10 below, identify the locations where themes and stories will be presented and the media and formats through which they will be conveyed and experienced. Use the family of exhibit elements included in the design guidelines as the foundation for coordinated presentation heritage area-wide, but identify unique, creative, interactive concepts for presentations of different themes in different places. Involve partners in the development of design concepts, both partners knowledgeable in exhibit content and partners responsible for sites where exhibits are proposed. Incorporate the existing and proposed programs of partners into the plan where appropriate and possible. Outline overall phasing for the interpretive plan's implementation.

2. Design of the family of exhibit carriers, kiosks, signage types, and graphic formats that will serve as the foundation for interpretive exhibits to be implemented throughout the heritage area. Incorporate the concepts and actions outlined in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.8 above on *Heritage Area Identity* and *Public Art*. Coordinate with existing graphic formats being implemented within the region as appropriate. Prepare a comprehensive design guidelines document detailing exhibit elements and describing graphic formats to be used in implementation for future projects.

3. Prepare conceptual designs for exhibits proposed in item 2 above heritage area-wide. Use maps, plans, elevations, illustrations, and photographs to convey exhibit concepts. Supplement visual information with written descriptions providing guidance for future design development and implementation.

4. As an integral part of the interpretive presentation, develop concepts for a Heritage Area Media Experience as outlined in section 2.2.5 above. In addition, describe the role of personal services, such as interpretive guides and hiving

history outlined in section 2.2.7 above, both heritage area-wide and in the presentation of specific themes and stories.

5. Prepare a Phase 1 Implementation Plan identifying elements of the plan that can be implemented within a two-year timeframe. Take stories, locations, and projected budgets into account in preparing the Phase 1 Plan, concentrating upon elements that will have significant impact, will provide a foundation for future projects, and which are achievable within the timeframe. Describe the implementation process.

6. Prepare an order-of-magnitude cost estimate for the interpretive plan as a whole with line items for each proposed interpretive elements. Organize the cost estimate by phase.

7. Prepare a detailed cost estimate for the Phase 1 Implementation Plan.

ACTION: Develop a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan that identifies the best places and means by which to tell each story and details how phased implementation will be undertaken. The stories will be woven together to create a unified approach to interpretation within the heritage area.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area themes through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming as identified in the comprehensive interpretive plan, creating a world class visitor experience and enhancing landscape and community character.

Undertaking the Interpretive Plan

Preparation of the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan should be undertaken through the following steps:

- Establish a project budget based upon the costs of recent projects undertaken in other places;
- Identify and secure sources of funding for the project;
- Establish a timeframe and schedule for organization and implementation of the project; consider a three-month period for organization and contracting and one-year period for implementation;
- Develop a process for undertaking the project that will serve as the basis for a Request for Proposals; include a process for partner and public engagement;
- Identify the qualities required of the professional consultants to be retained, including interpretive planning and high quality exhibit design especially in landscape venues; create a preliminary list of possible consultants;
- Prepare a Request for Proposals; outline the project goals, qualifications needed, available budget; scope of work, submission requirements, and selection process; prepare a draft contractual agreement for the project;
- Send the Request for Proposals directly to the list of possible consultants; advertise the RFP publicly;

- Upon receipt of proposals, select a shortlist of three to five consultant teams for interviews;
- Conduct consultant interviews and finalize selection of a consultant;
- Finalize a contractual agreement with the selected contractor;
- Commence work.

Primary Partners

At minimum, it is anticipated that the following heritage area partners will be involved in the interpretive plan project, both because of interpretive knowledge and experience and because of the locations where interpretive presentations are proposed:

- Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission, Interpretive Committee, and Staff
- New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Western District, Niagara Region (New York State Parks)
- Niagara River Greenway Commission and NYPA-funded Standing Committees
- City of Niagara Falls
- Village of Youngstown
- Village of Lewiston
- Community of LaSalle
- Town of Lewiston
- Town of Porter
- Tuscarora Nation
- Seneca Nation
- Tonawanda Seneca Nation
- USA Niagara
- Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area (State Heritage Area)
- Old Fort Niagara Association
- Power Vista
- Artpark & Company, Inc.
- Historical Association of Lewiston
- Lewiston Council for the Arts
- Town of Porter Historical Society
- Oakwood Cemetery
- Niagara Arts and Cultural Center
- North Tonawanda History Museum
- Niagara County History Center
- Das Haus Museum

- Global Spectrum and Subsequent Events Contractors
- NCCC Culinary Institute and Hospitality and Tourism
- Niagara University Tourism Heritage Institute
- New York Power Authority
- Niagara Wine Trail
- Environmental Organizations
- Audubon Society
- Niagara 1812 Legacy Council
- Parks Canada
- National Park Service's Network to Freedom Program

The following sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.9 outline the heritage area's themes and storylines and concepts and ideas considered to-date for their interpretation.

2.3.1 Natural Phenomenon

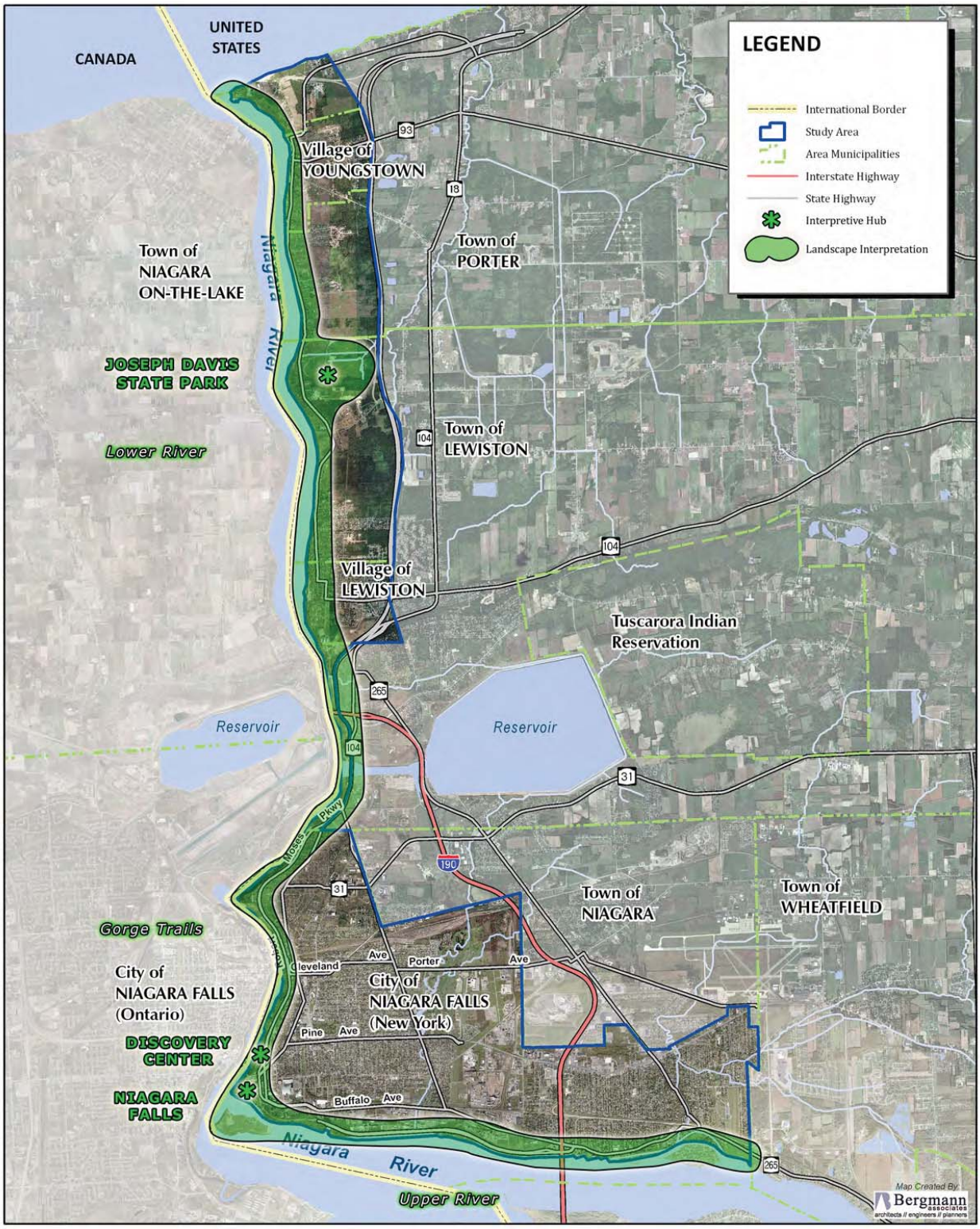
The theme *Natural Phenomenon* interprets the natural history of the Niagara Falls, River, and Gorge. It includes presentation of the region's geology, the hydrologic processes that have created the Falls and Gorge, and the river corridor and Lake Ontario ecosystems with their distinctive plant and animal communities. Interpretation should describe the changes that have occurred to the landscape over time, including changes experienced through human development over the past three hundred years. It should conclude with presentation and understanding of the landscape today and its stewardship and conservation into the future.

Natural Phenomenon is a theme that should be attractive to all audiences visiting the Falls. It provides the context for understanding and appreciating the spectacular experience of the Falls and should be used to engage all visitors. It will be attractive to a range of niche audiences as well, including botanists, birders, fishermen, hikers, and others. Interpretation should be designed to support the heritage area's educational curriculum for students and local youth.

This interpretive theme will be interpreted in the necklace of state parks, local parks, and public spaces that border the Niagara River from LaSalle on the south to Fort Niagara State Park on the north. It will build upon and enhance existing interpretive programs and presentations already being offered by the New York State Parks system. It should feature interpretation at Niagara Falls State Park, the State Park's Discovery Center, and Joseph Davis State Park. It should include creative and engaging interpretation offered along the region's extensive trail systems, encouraging visitors to explore by foot and by bicycle. Active recreation should be a central component of its implementation and will support the vision outlined in the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area theme *Natural Phenomenon* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Figure 2-1 Natural Phenomenon



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Figure 2-1

Locations for interpretation of the theme

NATURAL PHENOMENON

Natural Phenomenon Theme Statements

Primary Theme:
Natural Phenomenon
Niagara Falls is a natural phenomenon that is overwhelming in its magnitude and deeply embedded in popular consciousness. Over Niagara Falls courses the outflow of four of the Great Lakes. The distinctive characteristics of the Niagara Falls region can only be understood through appreciation of this unparalleled resource and the geological processes that form it. (Paraphrased from the Feasibility Study)

Secondary Themes:
Geological Forces
Formed 450 million years ago from layers of sand, silt, and clay, the Niagara Escarpment is an extensive landform visible as a line of steep slopes and long bluffs extending from New York State through Ontario, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois. The Niagara Gorge is the channel cut through the escarpment by the Niagara River over time, and Niagara Falls is the present location of that erosive action. The Niagara Falls and Gorge may be the Escarpment's best known landscape features.

Unique Ecosystems
The microclimates and environmental conditions created by the Niagara River and Gorge support a unique range of plant and animal ecosystems.

Changes in the Landscape
Human activity has dramatically altered the landscape in the vicinity of the Niagara River over the past 300 years and with it the nature and extent of the vegetation that occurs here. Haudenosaunne concepts of land use differed dramatically from those of European settlers. Today, only small, isolated remnants of the region's pre-settlement plant communities remain.

Landscape Stewardship
Beginning with the 'Free Niagara' movement of the 1870s that led to creation of the Niagara Reservation, conservation and stewardship of the Niagara River landscape has attracted strong public interest and action. That interest continues today and takes inspiration from the views of the Haudenosaunee.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas
The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the theme *Natural Phenomenon* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-1.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Interpret themes and stories related to *Natural Phenomenon* along a **continuous trail system** in the **necklace of state parks, local parks, and public spaces** that border the Niagara River from LaSalle on the south to Fort Niagara State Park on the north.

- Build upon the **existing interpretive programs** offered by New York State Parks and its partners.

- Niagara Falls State Park is undertaking redesign of interpretive exhibits in the **Niagara Gorge Discovery Center** focusing upon geology and related topics.

- Niagara Falls State Park is working to rehabilitate the **historic park landscape**, rehabilitate and open existing trails, and construct new trail connections and trailheads.

- New York State Parks is collaborating with the Town of Lewiston, and the Audubon Society to preserve and enhance **Joseph Davis State Park** for bird habitat and natural ecosystems.

- Support and help implement the Niagara River **Greenway's vision** for a trail system along the entire length of the Niagara River from LaSalle and Cayuga Island to Fort Niagara and Four Mile Creek State Parks.

- In collaboration with partners, plan, design, and install a **comprehensive network of landscape exhibits** interpreting themes, stories, and subjects related to *Natural Phenomenon* along the river corridor's continuous trail system. Use the interpretive exhibit design standards developed as part of the heritage area's identity and branding along with customized exhibits and public art designed to blend into the fabric of the landscape.

- Publish a range of **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation of *Natural Phenomenon* using a variety of formats and media platforms. Consider including a themed brochure, large fold-out map, interpretive guides, detailed trails guide, smartphone applications, and downloadable audio tours.

- Offer a range of **personal tours, hikes, and interpretive programs** building upon existing programming. Supplement existing programming with the assistance of qualified individuals associated with the heritage area's Certified Guides program. Aggressively market interpretive opportunities in pre-visit information.

- Coordinate interpretive programming with **environmental education** aspects of the National Heritage Area's educational and community engagement initiatives outlined in Chapter 4.

2.3.2 Tourism and Recreation

The theme *Tourism and Recreation* explores the development of Niagara Falls as a cultural symbol and tourist attraction. It encompasses a history of tourism that extends from early European and American encounters with the Falls to the growth of mass tourism, the honeymoon phenomenon, and modern efforts to revitalize the City of Niagara Falls. This theme describes the traditions of outrageous behavior at the Falls, such as high-wire acts and going over the Falls in a barrel. It explores the excesses of

commercialism that helped spark Frederic Law Olmsted-led efforts to protect what has become today's Niagara Falls State Park. New York State's example helped to build momentum for the creation, in other parts of the United States, of the National Parks System. Niagara Falls, however, remains a state park.

Tourism and Recreation is a theme that ties the City of Niagara Falls to the falls and the park. It should engage visitors and draw them into the downtown area. *Tourism and Recreation* portrays the changing relationships and responses of the city to the falls and to the tourism it generates. It continues to be relevant today in the city's ongoing program of revitalization and renewal.

This interpretive theme will be presented in downtown Niagara Falls, focusing upon Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard, where the city's commercial area for tourists has historically been located. Landscape exhibits along the streetscape, in public places, and incorporated into new commercial projects will be the primary means of interpretation. It will include a significant investment in public art enhancing the downtown area and presenting various aspects of the theme and its stories. It will directly support the City of Niagara Falls' vision for the Falls Precinct outlined in the city's 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area theme *Tourism and Recreation* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Tourism and Recreation Theme Statements

Primary Theme:

Tourism and Recreation

Niagara Falls has been an international cultural icon with different meaning and significance to different people over time.

Secondary Themes:

Wilderness and the American Experience

From their first encounters with the Falls until well into the 19th century, Europeans and their American descendents beheld Niagara with awe, perceiving it as an outstanding expression of the "sublime." To these early visitors the spectacle was emblematic of the New World, in which everything appeared outsized and limitless. Niagara exemplified the concept of wilderness, with the grandeur and terror it represented.

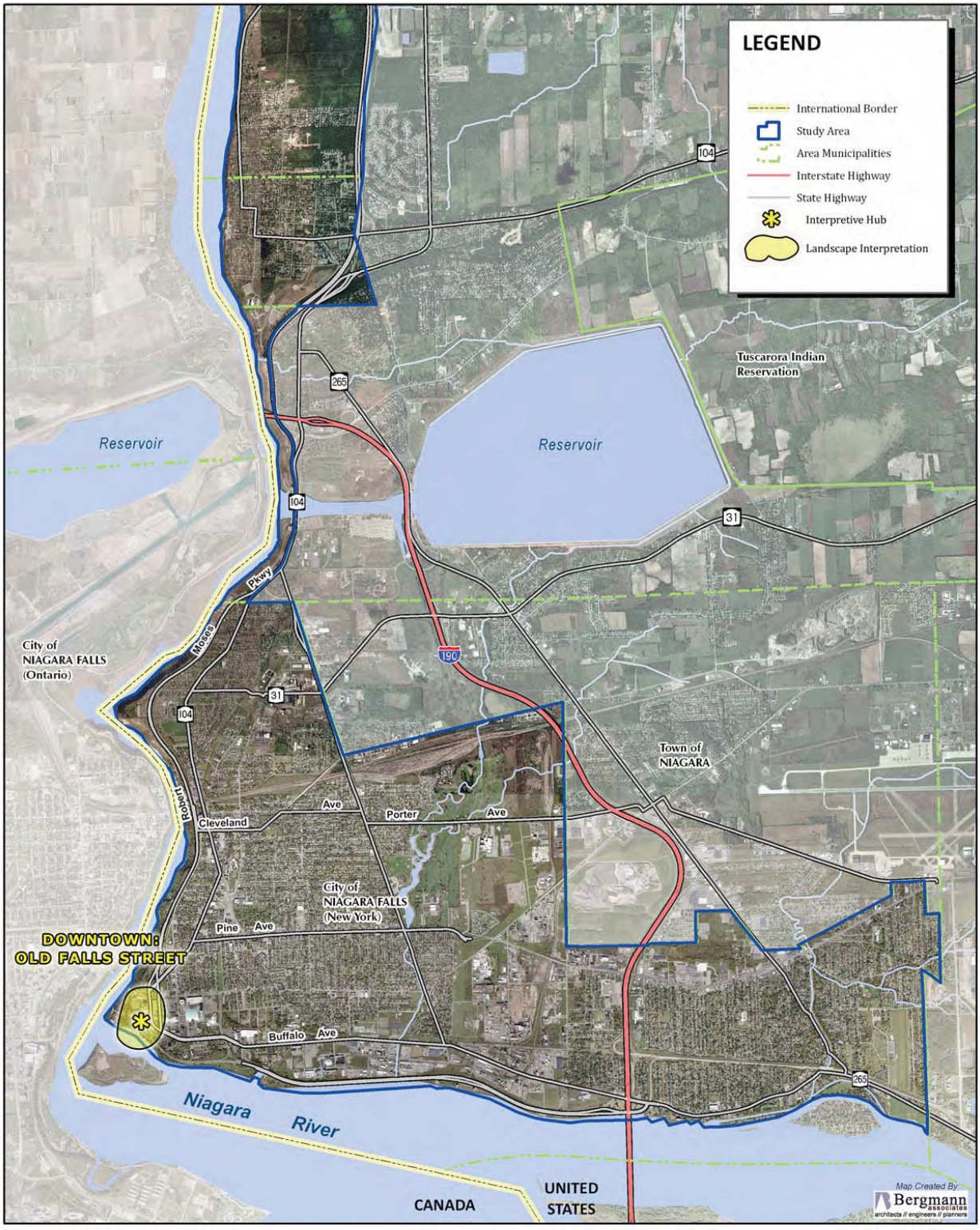
A Magnet for Visitors

Niagara Falls has been a favored destination of travelers for two centuries and is representative of the evolution of tourism in the nation as a whole.

Honeymoon Capital

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Niagara Falls became known as the Honeymoon Capital of the World. Thousands of newlyweds made the ritual pilgrimage to the Falls to inaugurate their lives together.

Figure 2-2 Tourism and Recreation



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 2-2

Locations for interpretation of the theme

TOURISM and RECREATION

Commercial Exploitation and Sensationalism
Even in its earliest incarnation, commercialism at Niagara Falls took on a seamy and aggressive tone. Unscrupulous entrepreneurs on both sides of the river competed with each other in cutthroat fashion in attracting and extracting money from unwary visitors. The tasteless and sensational nature of the commercial exploitation took on a life of its own.

Daredevils
Contributing to the sensational spectacle were individuals who undertook life-threatening feats and dangerous publicity stunts. Tight-rope walking and descending the Falls in a barrel were most prominent among the ways that publicity seekers sought public attention and acclaim.

Creating the Niagara Reservation
Niagara emerged as a major battleground between divergent visions of the value and meaning of the Falls and the natural environment in general. Educated, urban, and progressive forces battled to protect the integrity of the natural wonder in the face of economic exploitation by tourism, manufacturing, and hydropower generation. The Niagara Reservation was created in 1883 as the first state park, an early triumph of the American conservation movement, and a major influence on the creation of national parks.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas
The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the theme *Tourism and Recreation* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-2.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Interpret themes and stories related to *Tourism and Recreation* in downtown Niagara Falls, particularly in the **vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard**, which was the center of the city's commercial area catering to tourists.

- Through the interpretive presentation support implementation of the City of Niagara Falls 2009 **Comprehensive Plan** for the Falls Precinct and revitalization projects being undertaken by USA Niagara and other partners.

- Build upon the **existing projects** being undertaken by the City of Niagara Falls, USA Niagara, and other partners. Use new projects as a means to implement elements of the interpretive presentation.

- In collaboration with partners, plan, design, and install a **visually stimulating network of streetscape exhibits** interpreting the themes, stories, and subjects related to *Tourism and Recreation* within the Falls District of downtown Niagara falls. Use the interpretive exhibit standards developed as part of the heritage area's identity and branding along with public art and interactive exhibits designed to engage visitors and visually enhance the streetscape.

- Coordinate with **existing venues** such as the Daredevil Museum in presenting interpretation. Work on having consistent quality control and in establishing interpretive connections to other sites.

- Publish **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation of *Tourism and Recreation* using a variety of formats and media platforms. Consider including a themed brochure, interpretive guide, and downloadable audio tour.

- Support the year-long **program of public events** conducted along Old Falls Street. Develop special events specifically related to the theme *Tourism and Recreation* as well as presentations on the theme offered as a part of existing events.

- Offer walking tours conducted by the heritage area's Certified Guides on the theme *Tourism and Recreation*.

2.3.3 Power and Industry

In the generation of electrical power and the resultant industrial development, Niagara Falls presents a major story of technology and its consequences. The story is rich with personalities, innovation, and high-stakes risk. It includes the first development and installation of large electrical generators, the first long distance transmission of electrical power, and the attraction of cutting edge industries that have shaped human experience in the twentieth century.

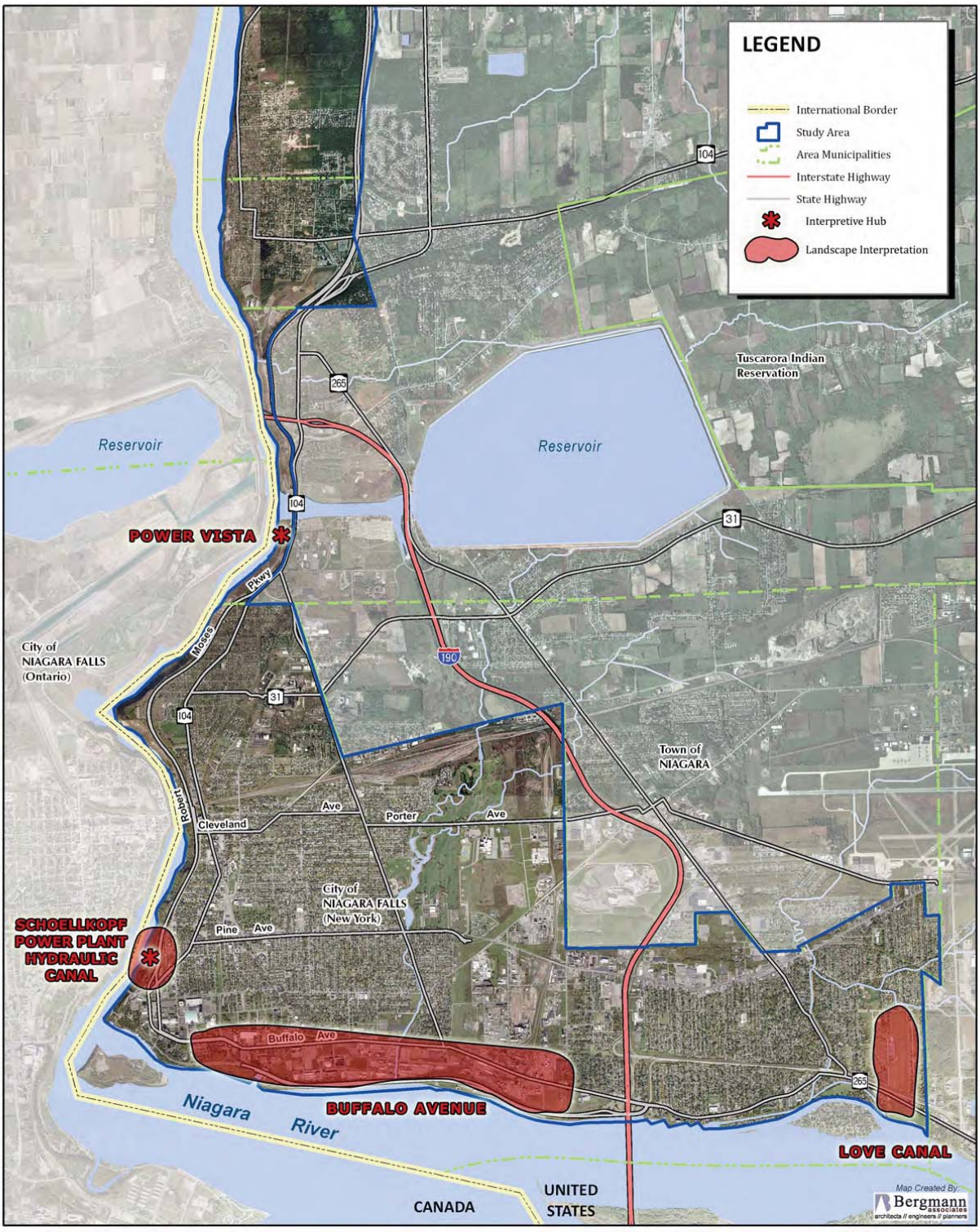
In highlighting the history of power generation, the theme *Power and Industry* presents a story of major technological advancements and the bi-national cooperation necessary to harness hydroelectric power at the Falls. The theme includes the industrial development that arose dependent upon Niagara power, pollution caused by industry, and today's efforts of environmental remediation.

Power and Industry is the story of the City of Niagara Falls. It is an opportunity to engage visitors and relate a story of deep significance to the nation, a story few visitors realize is here. This theme will be interpreted in four locations. The terminus of the Hydraulic Canal at the edge of the Niagara Gorge is the location where the groundbreaking Schoellkopf Power Station and Aluminum Company of America plant were constructed. Visitors will be intercepted here and introduced to the *Power and Industry* theme and stories. Over the longer term, a major new landscape interpretive presentation is proposed as a 'Power and Industry Plaza' in the re-envisioning of the city's proposed Cultural District in the same area.

The authentic industrial landscape along Buffalo Avenue will be interpreted using innovative large-scale exhibits. The story of Love Canal and the rise of the American environmental movement will be told in collaboration with the community of LaSalle. Power Vista will continue to tell the story of today's power industry.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area theme *Power and Industry* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Figure 2-3 Power and Industry



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 2-3
Locations for interpretation of the theme
POWER and INDUSTRY

Power & Industry Theme Statements

Primary Theme:

Power and Industry

Niagara Falls was the place where the large-scale generation of electricity was first undertaken with tremendous implications for changes in the American way of life.

Secondary Themes:

The Age of Electricity

The ability to generate and transmit electricity on a large scale was made possible at Niagara Falls through invention, competition, and entrepreneurial brinksmanship undertaken on a world-wide scale. The personalities and events surrounding this landmark technological breakthrough were colorful and audacious. Its implications for human society are still being felt today, and its promising potential as a source to help meet future energy needs is increasingly understood and appreciated.

Better Things for Better Living…Through Chemistry

The availability of large amounts of inexpensive hydroelectric power attracted new industries to Niagara Falls in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. New industrial processes were developed using temperature levels never before possible, resulting in a technological revolution. The electrochemical industry was created out of nothing and had far reaching effects on the production of primary materials and the manufacturing of goods that used those materials.

Utopian Vision

The dream of unlimited power available at Niagara Falls created an exuberant optimism that seemed to be borne out in the cutting-edge technologies, new products, and rapid growth and prosperity of the city. Niagara Falls was becoming an industrial metropolis that spawned utopian visions of the future.

The People of Niagara Falls

The city's rapid growth and expanding workforce attracted many new residents to Niagara Falls representing all levels of society and a diverse range of ethnic and racial backgrounds. They brought with them their own cultural traditions and established local ethnic communities that flourished and that remain vibrant today.

Robert Moses and the Power Authority

By the mid-twentieth century, the electrical revolution nationwide had caught up with Niagara Falls. Through a bi-national agreement, a new vision for regional hydroelectric power generation was established and new power plants were constructed. In the City of Niagara Falls, large-scale changes to the city's urban fabric were undertaken led by Robert Moses amid great controversy. These changes did not halt the city's industrial decline, as industries began moving to other locations. Niagara Falls' position was no longer unique.

Birth of America's Environmental Movement

Niagara's industrial prosperity had unintended consequences. New technological and industrial processes led to the production of unusable byproducts and industrial waste

on a massive scale. Workers were exposed to extreme health hazards through lack of knowledge and recognition of the need to take necessary precautions. Waste products were disposed of in an expedient manner dangerous to public health. The publicity created by local activists at Love Canal contributed to the birth of the environmental movement and a national response to address problems related to industrial hazards.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas

The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the theme *Power and Industry* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-3.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Engage visitors at the **site of the former Hydraulic Canal, Schoellkopf Power Station, and Aluminum Company of America plant** along the Niagara Gorge.

- Using **landscape placemakers**, delineate the actual locations and extent of the Hydraulic Canal and ALCOA plant in the existing landscape to support interpretation.

- As a longer-term action, develop plans for an extensive, **world class landscape installation,** such as a Power and Industry Plaza, as part of the city's newly envisioned Cultural District, also in the vicinity of the Gorge, interpreting the theme *Power and Industry*.

- Coordinate with and support **Power Vista** in its programming and interpretation of today's power plant, contemporary electrical network, and power usage.

- Develop phased interpretation of the **Buffalo Avenue industrial corridor**. For the short term, develop a brochure, downloadable auto tour, and guided tours led by heritage area Certified Guides.

- Over the longer term, design and install **high quality billboard-scaled interpretive exhibits** of industrial character along Buffalo Avenue. Billboard-scaled exhibits are necessary to fit into the context of the industrial landscape and to be able to be appreciated from automobiles. Automobile pull-offs can be installed at each exhibit location where visitors may stop to see smaller, detailed interpretive exhibits. Exhibits on each major company could be installed. Include automobile pull-offs at each site with human-scaled exhibits, benches, and appropriate landscaping. Collaborate with remaining industries along Buffalo Avenue.

- Provide interpretation of the planned community of **Echota** near Buffalo Avenue in collaboration with residents.

- Work with the LaSalle community to guide interpretation of the story of **Love Canal** and its role in the birth of the environmental movement as well as the

community's other Power & Industry stories, such as the planned community in **Evershed**.

- Work to preserve and interpret the **Adams Transformer House**. Consider its possible long-term use as an interpretive hub for the *Power and Industry* theme once other interpretive steps have been undertaken and proven successful.

2.3.4 Borderland/Border Crossing

Niagara's position as an international boundary has shaped its character in many ways. The region was a center of conflict, first between the colonial powers of France and Great Britain, then between the United States and its former colonial ruler. The area was an important passage to the Great Lakes and the interior of the continent and contains resources that express its character as both a barrier and gateway. The long-time and continuing presence of the Haudenosaunee in the Niagara Region places the "borderland" theme in interesting perspective, since their presence predated the European-imposed concept of "border" and their struggles involved complex economic, social, and political relationships in the attempt to retain possession of their homeland and way of life.

The boundary at Niagara remains consequential. The US-Canadian border is the longest undefended international border in the world. The 30-mile region from Buffalo to Youngstown represents the only opportunity for a bridge crossing between Canada and the Unites States in the 450-mile long border section that stretches from Detroit to The Thousand Islands. Three of the four local bridges are located within the boundaries of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Legal, social, political, and security issues related to the border touch all of the themes to be interpreted within the heritage area. The concept of a Niagara Region that includes the geographic area on both sides of the river is one that the heritage area embraces in its regional perspective and will seek to advance through engagement and partnerships.

The theme *Borderland/Border Crossing* encompasses the broad story of human interaction within the Niagara Region from pre-contact through the present. Within the heritage area, it will be interpreted in part through five storylines that highlight milestones in the course of events and can be used to convey the broader subjects of the movements, interests, conflicts, and accommodations of peoples within the region. Additional stories may be developed for this theme as appropriate.

Primary Theme Statement
The Niagara Frontier, from first contact to today, has played a critical role in the contest of nations (European, Native American and Colonial/American) for economic and political control of the river and its falls. As a key transportation nexus, the region has evolved as an international border with resulting impacts and consequences to its history and character.

2.3.5 Borderland: The Western Door

The storyline *The Western Door* interprets the history and culture of the Haudenosaunee people of Western New York and Southern Ontario as it relates to Niagara Falls and the Niagara River. It refers to the Seneca Nation's role as the "Keepers of the Western Door" of the longhouse. As the westernmost of the Six Nations at the time of the formation of the Iroquois League, the Seneca monitored and protected this entrance to the Haudenosaunee world. Interpretation is undertaken in partnership with the Tuscarora and Seneca Nations and will help visitors understand and appreciate the Haudenosaunee world view and how their perspective translates into the lives of individuals and communities.

The Western Door will be interpreted in conjunction with the theme *Natural Phenomenon* in the necklace of state parks, local parks, and public spaces that border the Niagara River from LaSalle south to Old Fort Niagara. Interpretive presentations of the two themes will be intertwined as appropriate to reinforce each other and strengthen appreciation of the natural world. Interpretive hubs featuring specific aspects of the Haudenosaunee story are proposed within Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park, and Old Fort Niagara in cooperation with New York State Parks. Interpretive programming will emphasize the role of the Haudenosaunee in shaping regional history, environmental education and restoration, and the relationship of man within the natural world.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area storyline *The Western Door* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

The Western Door Theme Statements

Primary Theme:

The Western Door

Haudenosaunee means "People who are building an extended house" and refers to the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, the most powerful Native American influence east of the Mississippi. As the westernmost of the Six Nations, the Seneca were known as the "Keepers of the Western Door."

Secondary Themes:

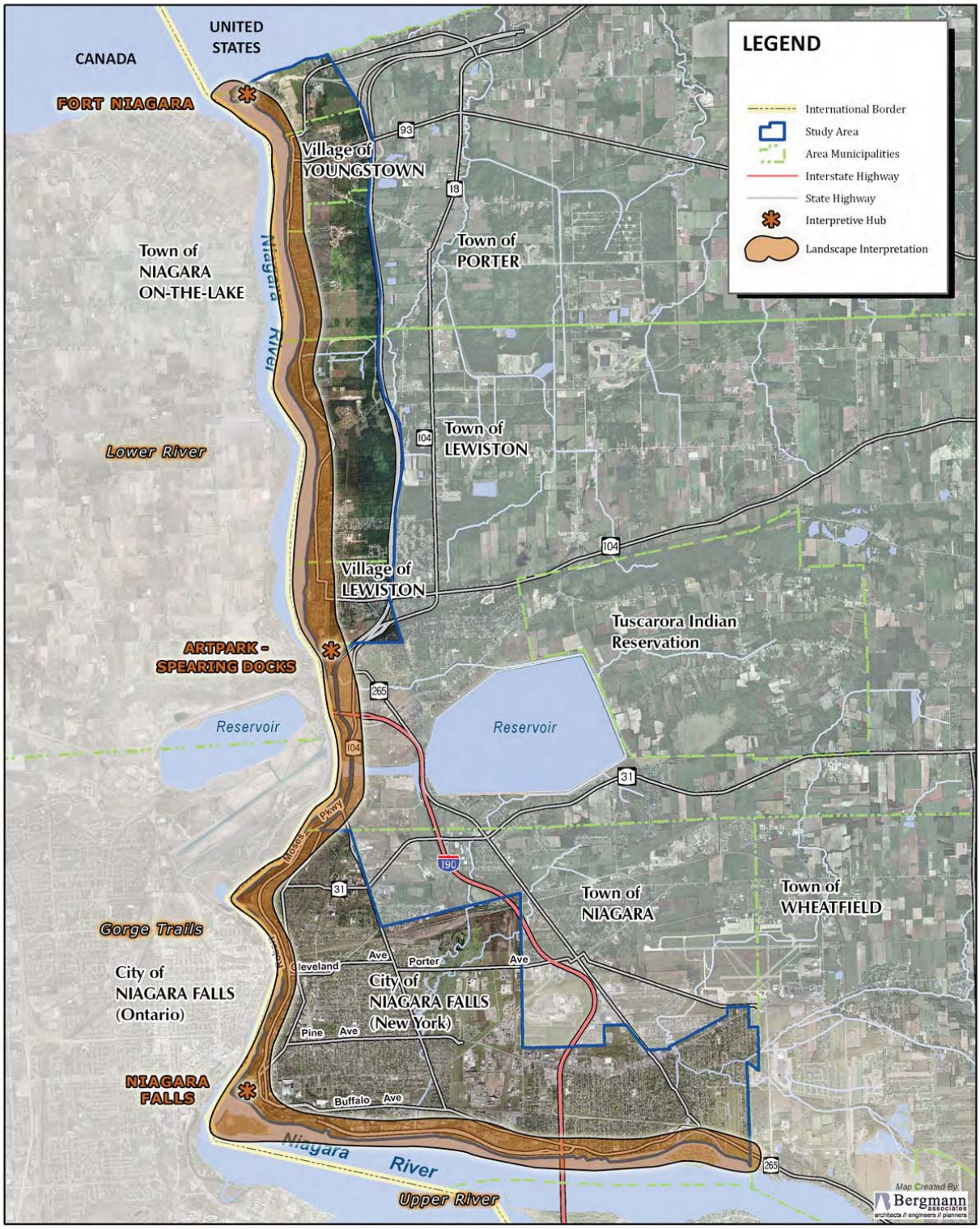
The Seneca

For over a thousand years the Seneca people have lived in what is now known as Western New York State. They have witnessed, experienced, and endured many changes over those centuries. Today, they are a proud Nation with a rich history and culture, and a promising future. Like their ancient ancestors, they treasure the beauty of their lands and the bounty of nature, but they have also built a strong, sovereign economy focused on improving the lives of their people.

The Tuscarora

People of the Tuscarora Nation migrated to eastern New York from North Carolina in the 18th century to join with the Haudenosaunee. Later in the eighteenth century, many Tuscarora moved again, to the Niagara region. Their story is an amazing tale of survival and is testimony to the adaptability of the Tuscarora culture. Today, the Tuscarora continue to operate under a traditional form of government with respect for civility and law, a tradition of sharing and giving back, and a sense of stewardship for the land.

Figure 2-5 Borderland: The Western Door



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Figure 2-5

Locations for interpretation of the theme

BORDERLAND: THE WESTERN DOOR

The Niagara River

Long known as a portage between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, Niagara Falls and the Niagara River were significant to the Haudenosaunee. By the mid-18th century, the region was controlled by the Seneca, and the portage provided work for Seneca men. Oral tradition of the Haudenosaunee tells of spirits living beneath the Niagara Falls, called the Thunder Beings, saving a young woman from taking her own life, a story that was later romanticized into "the Maid of the Mist." Evidence of fishing culture predating Seneca and Tuscarora arrival along the Niagara River can be found in many archeological sites. Permanent residency of the Tuscarora along the river revitalized the Haudenosaunee occupation of these ancient fishing sites.

The Ganonyok

The Haudenosaunee view the natural world and its bounty as a gift and their community as connected to a living earth and a spiritual universe. The Haudenosaunee people give thanks each day through the Ganonyok, a daily expression of gratitude that serves as a reminder to acknowledge and appreciate all things. The Ganonyok reinforces the connection that people have to the world around them.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas

The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the storyline *The Western Door* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-4.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Interpret themes and stories related to *The Western Door* in the **necklace of state parks, local parks, and public spaces** that border the Niagara River from LaSalle south to Old Fort Niagara.

- In collaboration with partners, plan, design, and install a **comprehensive network of landscape exhibits** interpreting themes, stories, and subjects related to *The Western Door* along the river corridor's trail system. Intertwine interpretation with that of the theme *Natural Phenomenon.*

- Include the opportunity for **living history presentations** by the Seneca and Tuscarora peoples within the heritage area..

- Continue and enhance the 'customary use' of Tuscarora women **selling traditional beadwork in the vicinity of Niagara Falls and the rapids.**

- Feature the **Tuscarora Nation exhibit** at Power Vista in the overall interpretive presentation.

- Interpret the **lower river spearing docks** along the Niagara River.

- In association with the lower river spearing docks, present interpretation of the **Tuscarora Nation** and its culture today, including present relationships with the United States.

- Include interpretation of the Seneca in relation to the story of controlling the portage around the falls and **carrying European goods up the Escarpment**.

- Support continued involvement and interpretation of the 18th century Haudenosaunee story as it relates to the theme *Clash of Cultures* at **Old Fort Niagara** and other military history sites within the National Heritage Area.

- Publish a range of **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation in collaboration with partners.

- Coordinate and support **guided tours, living history programming, and events** in collaboration with partners.

2.3.6 Borderland: Clash of Empires

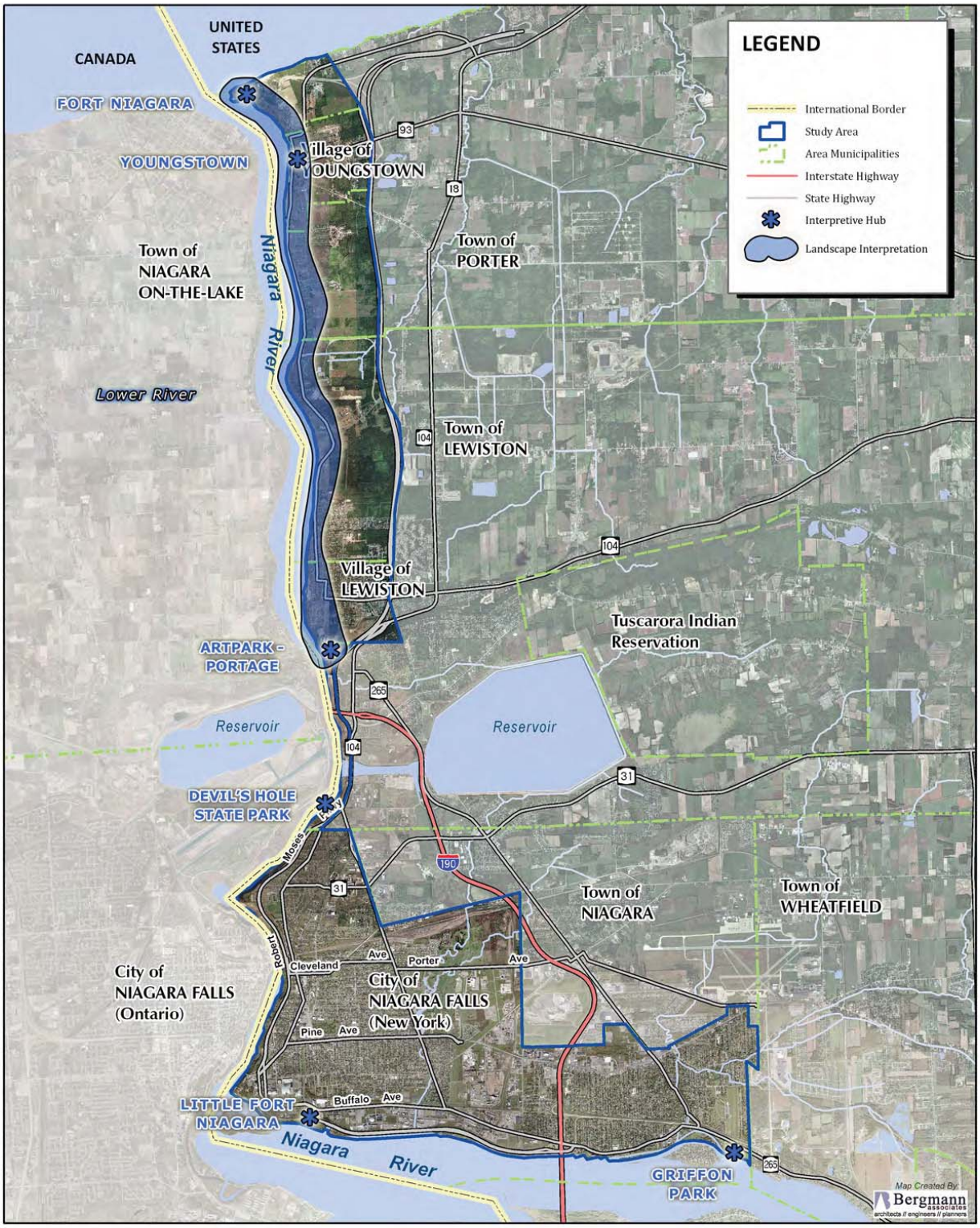
The storyline *Clash of Empires* interprets Niagara's role in the mid-18th century global conflict between France and Great Britain known worldwide as the Seven Years War and in the United States as the French and Indian War. The portage at Niagara Falls was of international strategic significance as the gateway to the interior of the North American continent by way of the Great Lakes, and the British siege of Fort Niagara was a critical turning point in the war as it played out in North America.

Clash of Empires is among the most exciting and dramatic themes being interpreted within the Niagara region, second only to the Falls itself. Old Fort Niagara is an impressive historic site, and the interpretive programs conducted there by the Old Fort Niagara Association are excellent and appreciated by visitors of all ages. The objective of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is to increase visitation to Old Fort Niagara by supporting its programming and to spread its storytelling throughout the Lower Niagara River.

Interpretation of this theme will therefore be centered at Old Fort Niagara. Exhibits and programming may also be offered at other locations of significance to the story, including Youngstown, where the critical battle of La Belle-Famille occurred, as well as both ends of the portage, the lower river landing within Artpark State Park and the site of Little Fort Niagara on the upper river. The theme also proposes interpretation of LaSalle's 1669 and 1679 expeditions at Griffon Park in the community of LaSalle on the upper river, the fur trade before 1759, and the post-war Battle of Devil's Hole of 1763.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area storyline *Clash of Empires* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Figure 2-6 Borderland: Clash of Empires



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Figure 2-6

Locations for interpretation of the theme

BORDERLAND: CLASH of EMPIRES

Clash of Empires Theme Statements

Primary Theme:

Clash of Empires

The Niagara River was of international strategic significance as the gateway to the interior of the North American continent by way of Great Lakes. This route gave French forces access from the St. Lawrence River Valley to the Ohio, Illinois, and Mississippi River Valleys. If they could control it, British settlement could be contained to the thin line of colonies along the east coast.

Secondary Themes:

Niagara Portage

Access to the interior of the continent by way of the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River, and Great Lakes required portage around the Falls. The economic and strategic significance of the portage was well known to the Haudenosaunee, early European explorers, military forces, and frontier settlers. After the attack at Devil's Hole in 1763, Seneca attempts to control this route as part of their role as 'Keepers of the Western Door' became less successful and British influence gained power.

Siege of Fort Niagara

The nineteen-day siege of Fort Niagara by British forces in 1759 was the climax of a century-long struggle for the northern gateway to the interior of the North American continent. Conduct of the siege followed the classic techniques of then-modern warfare applied to the wilds of the remote American frontier. The bloody repulse of French troops sent to raise the siege at La Famille and subsequent capitulation of the fort ended all hopes of French ambitions within the Great Lakes.

Impact on the Haudenosaunee

The long standing Haudenosaunee strategy of playing European nations against each other lacked leverage with the French loss of Fort Niagara and North America.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas

The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the storyline *Clash of Empires* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-5.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Support, enhance, and market the broad range of interpretive programming offered at **Old Fort Niagara** by the Old Fort Niagara Association and its partners as the core of interpretation related to the theme *Clash of Empires*.

- To the extent possible on public lands, use **landscape placemakers** to delineate the approximate location and layout of British siege works east of Fort Niagara. If not possible, clearly convey the scale and distances involved in interpretation at the fort.

- Explore the possibility of creating a major landscape interpretive exhibit on the **Battle of Belle-Famille** within Falkner Park or at another appropriate location in Youngstown. Coordinate interpretation with Old Fort Niagara and link the sites with interpretation along the Greenway trail system.

- Consider various alternatives for interpretation of the **portage around Niagara Falls** at Earl W. Brydges Artpark State Park and up the escarpment. Coordinate the exhibit with interpretation of the Seneca and Tuscarora Nations and lower river spearing docks as outlined for the theme *The Western Door.*

- Implement a major landscape interpretive exhibit near the site of **Little Fort Niagara** in Porter Park along Buffalo Avenue in the City of Niagara Falls. Highlight the existing chimney ruin. Feature interpretation of the fort and use of the upper landing over time.

- Implement a major landscape interpretive exhibit on **LaSalle's 1679 expedition** in Griffon Park in the community of LaSalle. The exhibit could include a replica of the *Griffon* under construction if enough is known about the appearance of the ship.

- Consider various alternatives for the interpretation of the **Battle of Devil's Hole** in conjunction with interpretation of the portage route at suitable sites.

- Consider various alternatives for the interpretation of the **British landing and encampment** during the siege of Fort Niagara at Four Mile Creek.

- Publish a range of **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation in collaboration with partners.

- Coordinate and support **guided tours, living history programming, and events** in collaboration with partners.

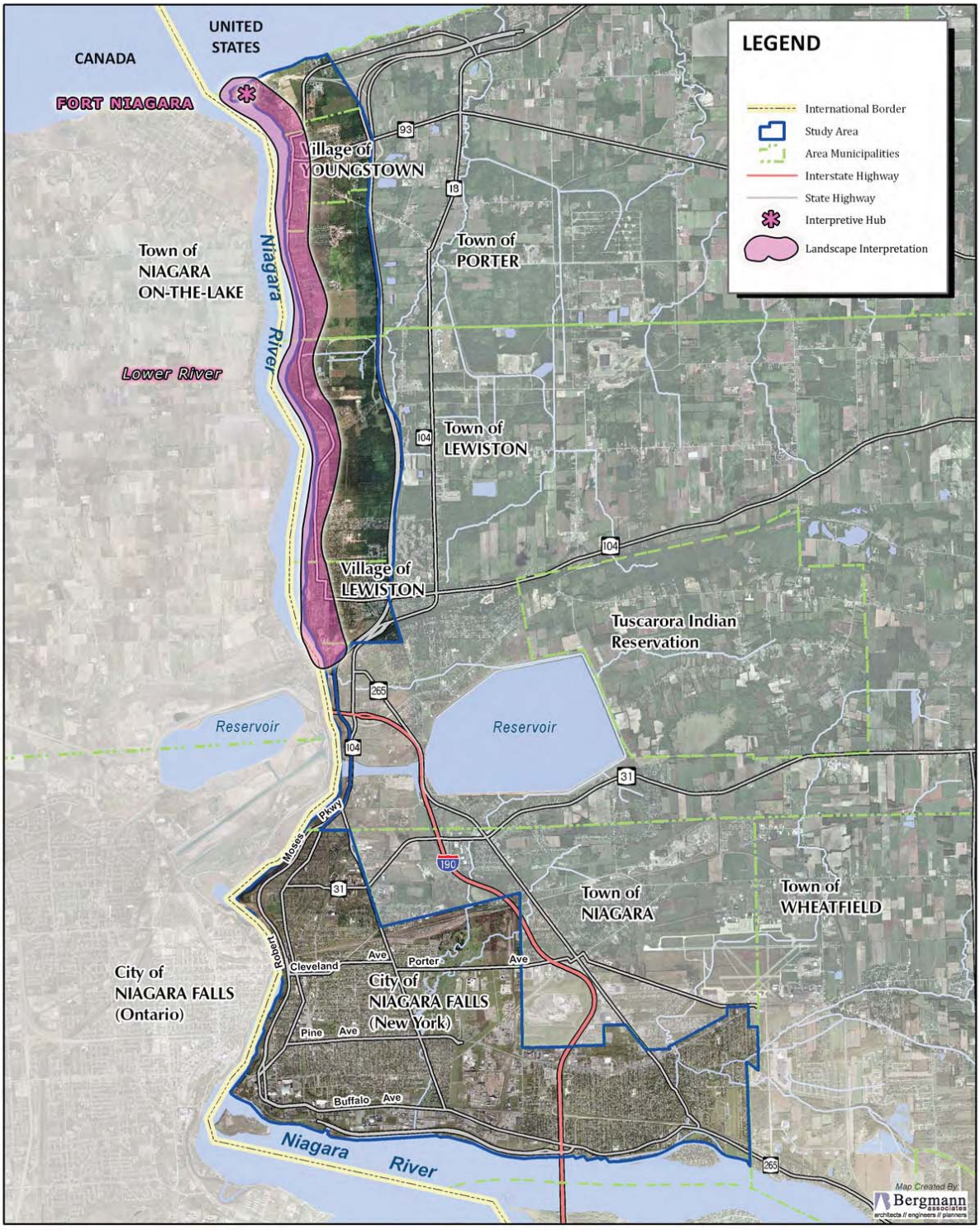
2.3.7 Borderland: Revolutionary Frontier

The storyline *Revolutionary Frontier* interprets the role of the Niagara River region in the American Revolution. As a British base of activities, Niagara's story is related to the conduct of the war throughout frontier New York. It was particularly significant for the Haudenosaunee, who were largely driven from their lands in the eastern and central parts of New York due to their siding with the British. The Haudenosaunee played a key role in fighting along the frontier.

Interpretation of the Revolutionary Era within the heritage area will be centered at Old Fort Niagara, which already addresses the story. It may be shared with Lewiston and Youngstown as a subject for interpretation along the entire Lower Niagara River.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area storyline *Revolutionary Frontier* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Figure 2-7 Borderland: Revolutionary Frontier



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Figure 2-7

Locations for interpretation of the theme

BORDERLAND: REVOLUTIONARY FRONTIER

Revolutionary Frontier Theme Statements

Primary Theme:
Revolutionary Frontier
During the American Revolution, the British base at Fort Niagara served as a safe haven for those loyal to the British, whether European settlers or Haudenosaunee villagers, and a base for offensive operations against colonial settlements on the frontier.

Secondary Themes:
Neighbor against Neighbor
Combined colonial and Native American forces organized at Fort Niagara conducted raids against colonial settlements in the Mohawk Valley and northeastern Pennsylvania, their former neighbors, in an escalating cycle of violence and atrocities.

Division of the Six Nations
Active participation by most Haudenosaunee tribes on the British side and some on the American side through raids on the frontier led to the targeting of their villages in central New York by American forces. As a result of the war, the Six Nations were divided, with some moving to Ontario and others staying in New York; the Tuscarora fought on both sides of the Revolutionary War. Post-war treaties shrank Haudenosaunee lands to a few scattered reservations, opening Western New York for settlement by Europeans.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas
The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the storyline *Revolutionary Frontier* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-6.

- Support, enhance, and market interpretation related to the American Revolution offered at **Old Fort Niagara** by the Old Fort Niagara Association and its partners.
- **Coordinate with other sites** interpreting the American Revolution in New York such as Fort Stanwix National Monument, Saratoga National Historical Park, Oriskany Battlefield State Historic Site, Newtown Battlefield State Park, and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.
- Publish **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation in collaboration with partners.
- Coordinate and support **living history programming, and events** in collaboration with Old Fort Niagara, Lewiston, Youngstown, and other partners along the Lower Niagara River.

2.3.8 Borderland: War of 1812

The storyline *War of 1812* builds upon existing initiatives currently being undertaken to celebrate the bicentennial of the War of 1812. The Niagara 1812 Legacy Council, a bi-national collaboration led by organizations in Canada, will be featuring a wide range of events at historic sites along the Niagara River over the next two years. On the US side of the river, the War of 1812 is currently interpreted at Old Fort Niagara and events associated with the war are held in Lewiston. Because of the border with Canada, the War of 1812 was a significant event in the region, with military action dramatically

affecting the lives of local residents and further dividing the Haudenosaunee and limiting their movement across the Niagara River. The bicentennial celebrations should be used as a means of strengthening and enhancing interpretation of the War of 1812 story as a permanent interpretive presentation on the US side of the river.

This storyline will be interpreted primarily along the Lower Niagara River with Old Fort Niagara playing the lead role. Interpretation may also be presented in the City of Niagara Falls with respect to Fort Schlosser, the Porters, and other possible subjects. *War of 1812* is an opportunity to build a stronger collaboration with organizations and sites on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. The heritage area should lead the collaboration with Canadian organizations.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area storyline *War of 1812* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

War of 1812 Theme Statements

Primary Theme:
War of 1812
As a boundary between the United States and British-held Canada, the Niagara River was a scene of conflict in which residents became deeply engaged. At least five major battles occurred near the river's 35-mile length, but the border returned to its pre-war status. Villages on both sides were burned. The British occupied Fort Niagara and neutralized the countryside south to Buffalo.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas
The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the storyline *War of 1812* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-7.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Actively engage with the **Niagara 1812 Legacy Council** in coordinating and strengthening the relationship between US and Canadian interpretive initiatives.

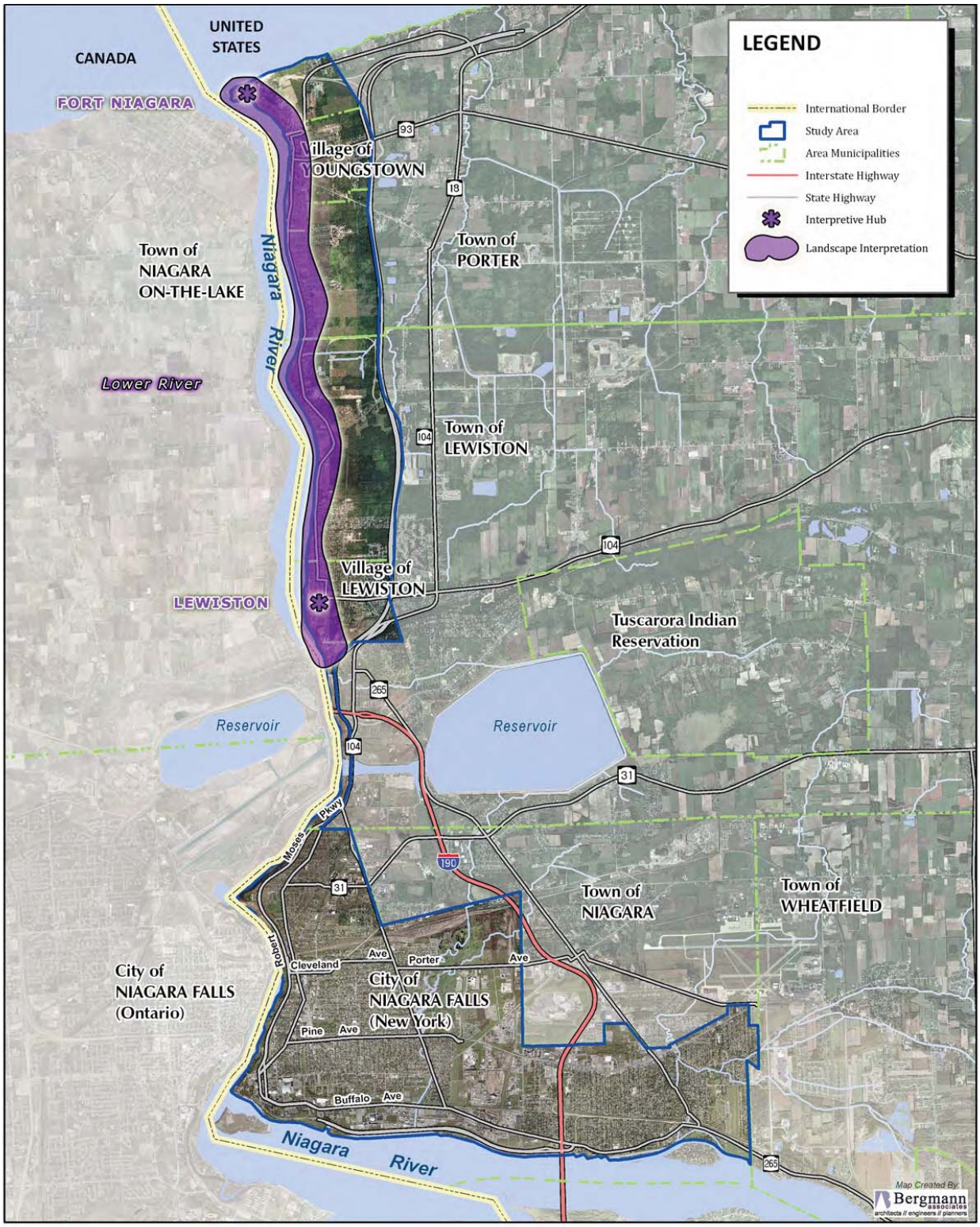
- Support, enhance, and market interpretation related to the War of 1812 offered at **Old Fort Niagara** by the Old Fort Niagara Association and its partners.

- Work with the communities of **Youngstown and Lewiston** on interpretive exhibits, programming, and events.

- Consider installing exhibits interpreting Fort Schlosser, the Porters, and other subjects at **Porter Park** in Niagara Falls.

- Publish **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation in collaboration with partners.

Figure 2-8 Borderland: War of 1812



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Figure 2-8

Locations for interpretation of the theme

BORDERLAND: WAR of 1812

2.3.9 Borderland: Underground Railroad

The storyline *Underground Railroad* interprets the role of Niagara Falls and the Niagara region as a crossing point for African Americans fleeing to Canada to escape slavery. Interpretation will feature collaboration between the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area (State Heritage Area), the City of Niagara Falls' North Star Initiative, and the villages of Lewiston and Youngstown.

The Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area is a New York State Heritage Area created to study, preserve, and interpret sites related to the Underground Railroad in the Niagara Falls region. The State Heritage Area has undertaken research and prepared a management plan that identifies historic sites and outlines a program of interpretation of the city's Underground Railroad stories. Closely associated with the State Heritage Area is the city's North Star Initiative, which is implementing interpretive exhibits at the historic Customhouse on Whirlpool Street at the site of Suspension Bridge, a crossing point for many freedom-seekers.

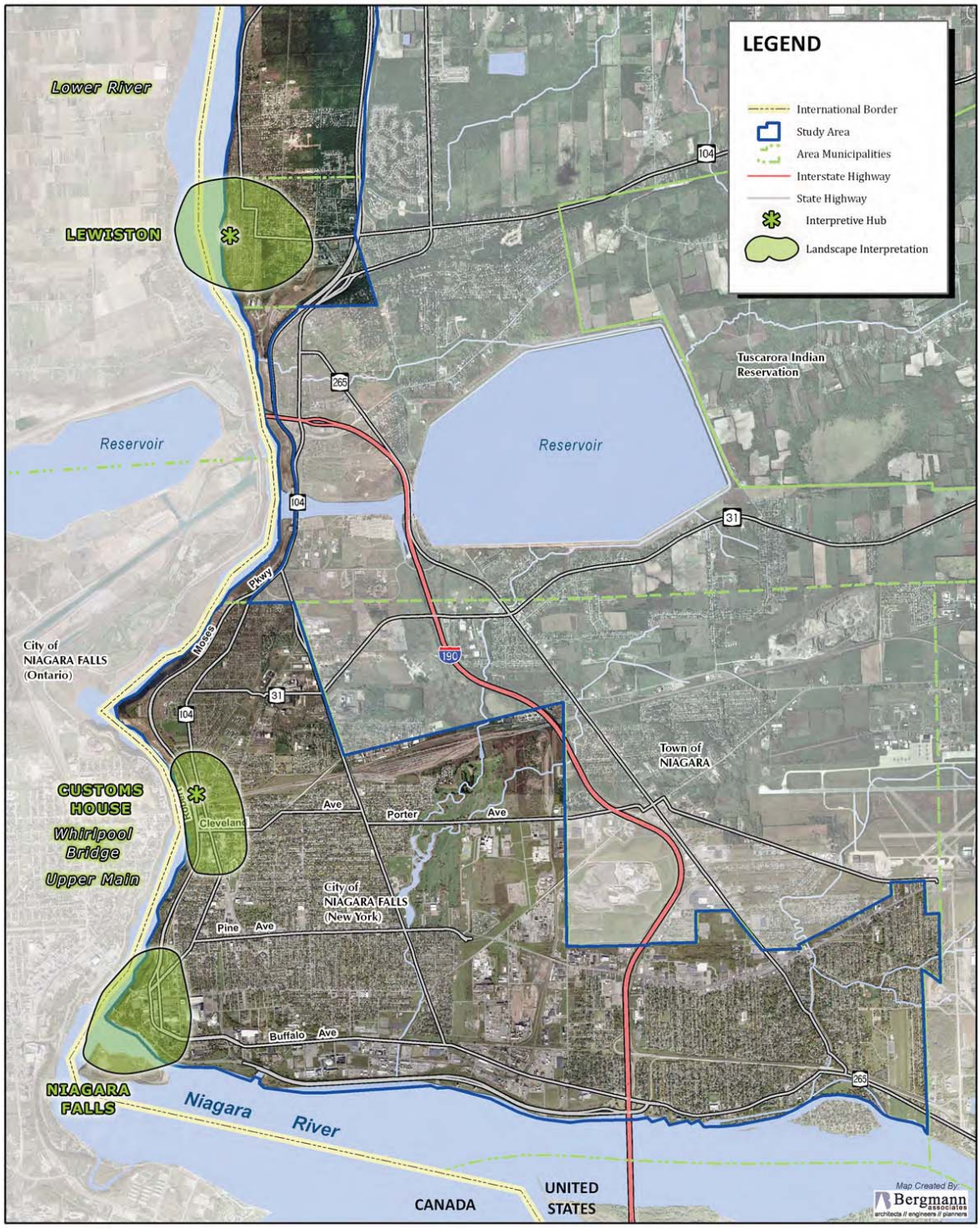
The work of the National Heritage Area, State Heritage Area, and North Star Initiative have been coordinated into a single interpretive presentation. The State Heritage Area will provide leadership in implementing interpretation within the City of Niagara Falls, while the National Heritage Area will coordinate interpretation by partners outside of the city. Presentation concepts and programming will be fully integrated between sites and will emphasize artwork, sculpture, and landscape enhancements featuring interpretive messaging. The National Heritage Area reserves the right to evaluate and certify the authenticity and quality of any interpretive efforts it might support.

ACTION: Interpret the heritage area storyline *Underground Railroad* through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.

Underground Railroad Theme Statements
Interpretive themes for the storyline *Underground Railroad* are being developed in collaboration with the State Heritage Area. The historical research and community outreach for the State Heritage Area included the definition of significant interpretive themes that speak to and provide connection between the various sites, stories, people, and topics associated with the Underground Railroad in Niagara Falls. Suggested themes that could be used to illustrate significant connections and provide for consistent interpretation at diverse sites and various programming endeavors are outlined below.

Primary Theme:
Crossing the Niagara Gorge
The Niagara River and Gorge was an important crossing point into Canada for fugitives following the Underground Railroad. For the fugitive freedom seekers who passed through the Niagara Frontier, the physical act of crossing the Niagara River represented the final act of courage and determination at the end of a long, arduous journey.

Figure 2-9 Borderland: Underground Railroad



Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Figure 2-9

Locations for interpretation of the theme

BORDERLAND: UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Secondary Themes:
Power, Struggle, and Freedom

The Niagara Frontier was contested ground in the struggle between established economic and political interests that supported the institution of American slavery, and the enslaved people, fugitives, freedom seekers, and abolitionists who opposed that institution. The Underground Railroad serves as an inspirational moral tale about the brilliant, organized, deliberate, and peaceful resistance to power that allowed the unlikely alliance of the enslaved and free opponents of slavery to undermine and eventually overturn the powerful, embedded institution of American slavery.

Destination: Niagara Falls
The Niagara Frontier was the ultimate destination for many fugitive enslaved peoples and represented the end of their perilous journey to freedom. Many of those individuals remained in, or returned to, Niagara Falls and helped to shape the physical, economic, and social landscape of the City.

The Past is Always Present
Niagara Falls' past includes the fierce struggle between freedom and slavery in the mid-nineteenth century, the resolve of fugitives to gain their freedom, and the proud dignity of the settlers and residents who helped to shape the present form and character of the City. That past has relevance to the contemporary experience of Niagara Falls, including its physical imprint on the urban landscape and the community's collective memory.

Interpretive Concepts, Locations, and Ideas
The following concepts provide a basis for interpretation of the storyline *Underground Railroad* within the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. See Figure 2-8.

- Introduce the primary theme at the heritage area's proposed **Interpretive Center** and provide visitors with information on opportunities for exploration.

- Feature the **Customhouse** as a primary **interpretive hub** presenting the Underground Railroad story in Niagara Falls through its interior exhibits.

- Install **outdoor exhibits in the vicinity of the Customhouse**, including on the Customhouse property, at the state park overlook into the Niagara Gorge at the Whirlpool Rapids Bridge, and at sites along Upper Main Street.

- Work with federal authorities on the possible use of the abandoned **Whirlpool Rapids Railroad Bridge** as a Gorge overlook which can be accessed by visitors.

- Install exhibits in downtown Niagara Falls in the **vicinity of Old Falls Street** interpreting the Cataract House, International Hotel, ferry crossing, and other sites and their roles in the Underground Railroad story.

- Implement an interpretive program in the **Village of Lewiston** featuring historic sites and stories along the Lower Niagara River associated with the Underground Railroad.

- Coordinate interpretation and programming related to the Underground Railroad theme at **sites in Niagara and Erie Counties** such as Murphy Orchards (a certified NPS 'Network to Freedom' site).

- Publish **interpretive materials** supporting interpretation in collaboration with partners.

- Coordinate and support **guided tours, living history programming, and events** in collaboration with partners.

- Assist sites with **'Network to Freedom' applications** to the National Park Service.

2.4 Regional Collaboration

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area offers a way to support regional collaboration in the areas of interpretation, heritage tourism, environmental conservation, and historic preservation. For the past decade, a number of regional partners on both the Canadian and US sides of the Niagara River have been thinking about ways in which regional collaboration can be strengthened and serve as a means for enhancing community character, the environment, and economic well-being.

The first step has been to find ways in which to reinforce public awareness of Niagara's regional identity; to encourage individuals and communities to think about the region as a recognizable entity in which all play a part. The second step has been to create decision-making structures that cross political boundaries in conceiving of and addressing issues of regional concern. The third step has been to actually undertake projects and initiatives that put that regional consciousness in play to achieve tangible results.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area plays a role in all three steps. Through interpretation, the heritage area helps strengthen regional identity by telling stories that link places together and communicates the regional identity to visitors and residents. As a decision-making entity that crosses political boundaries and includes many partners, the heritage area conceives of its mission in regional terms and its actions as the collaborative effort of its many partners working within their own realms of activity. Through the projects that the heritage area supports and undertakes, it will implement the regional vision to achieve tangible results.

The heritage area has three zones of activity:

1. The heritage area's enabling legislation identifies a bounded area that is the core of the national heritage area, including the City of Niagara Falls and a narrow area of land that stretches north along the Niagara River to Lake Ontario. Within this boundary, the heritage area will have a **direct, hands-on approach** to initiative and action as a collaboration of active partners.

2. Within Niagara and Erie Counties, the enabling legislation directs that the heritage area work with organizations, communities, and sites to which it is

related by its interpretive themes, described earlier in this chapter. In this realm, the heritage area will be an **active coordinator**, serving as a venue through which interested communities and sites can work together to tell the regional stories and encourage heritage tourism.

3. Within and beyond Niagara and Erie Counties, the heritage area will **collaborate with other regional, national, and bi-national organizations** and initiatives to promote regional identity and address regional issues of common concern. Regional issues in which the heritage area can play a strong role include:
    - economic well-being through cultural and heritage tourism,
    - community revitalization through historic preservation, and
    - environmental conservation through support of regional initiatives.

This chapter outlines how the heritage area can use interpretation as a means through which to strengthen regional identity and organize a regional presentation for heritage tourism. It will do so by collaborating with other regional, national, and bi-national organizations and initiatives and serving as a venue through which thematically related communities and sites can be interpretively linked.

ACTION: Create a regional interpretive collaboration that encourages participation by a wide variety of potential partners, including regional organizations, interpretive sites, Tribal governments, municipalities, historical societies and organizations, libraries, and others.

2.4.1 Regional, National, and Bi-national Collaboration

Regional, national, and bi-national organizations and initiatives provide a means through which local communities and sites can be interpretively linked, telling regional stories that reinforce regional identity for residents and visitors. The following organizations and initiatives are the heritage area's primary partners for interpretation of the Niagara Region.

Niagara Parks Commission, Canada

The Niagara Parks Commission (Niagara Parks) is New York State Park's sister organization on the Canadian side of the Niagara River. As an independent and self-financed agency of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Niagara Parks has great flexibility and focus upon creating an attractive visitor experience through its presentation of the Falls, riverside park land, two-lane parkway, and multiple attractions. Niagara Parks links a series of historic interpretive sites extending from Old Fort Erie at the mouth of the Niagara River opposite Buffalo to Fort George and other sites at Niagara-on-the-Lake opposite Fort Niagara. Fort George and Queenston Heights are National Historic Sites operated by Parks Canada.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and its partnering communities and sites should work with Niagara Parks and Parks Canada to identify thematic relationships for coordinating interpretation and events. Clear relationships exist for each of the themes presented earlier in this chapter. As the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area undertakes planning for its interpretive themes, it should review how each theme is addressed on the Canadian side and look for ways that interpretive relationships can

be drawn. This can be done most simply by making sure that themes are presented in their **regional context**, presenting their full regional significance and describing related historical events on both sides of the river. Canadian sites, communities, and landscapes should be included in these contexts along with those on the US side as part of a holistic presentation of the Niagara Region.

Individually, interpretive sites along the US side should note and **draw interpretive connections** to thematically related sites on the Canadian side. This can be done through exhibits and programming. While themes such as *Natural Phenomenon, Power and Industry,* and *Tourism and Recreation* have obvious interpretive relationships that can be drawn on both sides of the river, perhaps the strongest interpretive connections can be forged through the themes *War of 1812* and *Underground Railroad*.

In its 1812 bicentennial celebration, the Niagara 1812 Legacy Council features sites and stories on both sides of the border. However, programming is being led and supported more strongly by Canadian organizations than it is by those in the US. As an early action, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should do what it can to support the bicentennial celebration by coordinating with the Legacy Council and helping to organize and support the initiatives of US partners. The heritage area should use the bicentennial celebration as a means of creating cross-border interpretive relationships as part of its implementation of *War of 1812* interpretation.

Similarly, strong interpretive relationships exist around the theme *Underground Railroad*, Canada being the destination and goal of fugitives seeking freedom. Under the leadership of the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, the national heritage area should help forge interpretive connections that relate the stories of fugitives reaching and crossing the border with stories of their lives once they arrived in Canada. As mentioned above, this can be achieved by presenting the regional context that links these stories and by establishing interpretive connections between exhibits and programming at sites on both sides of the river.

ACTION: Promote the concept of a Niagara Region that includes both the US and Canadian sides of the Niagara River by presenting a *regional interpretive context* and by drawing *interpretive connections* between thematically related sites on both sides of the river.

Niagara River Greenway

The 2007 Niagara River Greenway Plan outlines a vision for environmental stewardship, trail systems, public access, and interpretation of the Niagara River corridor from Buffalo to Old Fort Niagara. The Greenway includes the entire boundary of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. This heritage area management plan has been created in full coordination with the Greenway Plan, adopting its stewardship vision and developing its interpretive concepts in additional detail as described in this chapter. Many if not most of the implementation actions undertaken by the heritage area partners will be toward implementation of the Greenway vision.

Interpretively, the Greenway Plan delineates five overarching interpretive themes and identifies sites where those themes are or can be interpreted. The five themes include:

- The Landscape – celebrating natural diversity, habitats, and the region's park systems;
- The Bounty of Nature – promoting local agriculture through the region's orchards, farms and farm markets with their locally grown fruits, vegetables, wines, flowers, and handicrafts;
- Enterprise in The Arts – featuring regional arts and culture including the visual arts, performing arts, and architectural treasures;
- Stories of War, Peace and Freedom – presenting interpretation of the region's multifaceted history; and
- The Wealth of a Region – highlighting the growth of power, commerce, and industry within the region in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area builds directly upon these themes and outlines how they will be interpreted in this chapter of the heritage area management plan. The heritage area themes presented here are detailed refinements of the broader Greenway themes as they are applied specifically to the heritage area landscape within the Greenway extending from the City of Niagara Falls north to Old Fort Niagara. The heritage area's interpretive plan is closely associated with the trail system described in the Greenway plan. The trail system is being implemented by partners consistent with both the Greenway and heritage area management plans. Implementation of the heritage area interpretive plan presented in this chapter will implement the Greenway Plan's interpretive vision.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will work to support the Greenway vision in all of its areas of activity. The heritage area will work closely with partners to identify which projects most directly support the Greenway vision and should therefore be prioritized for implementation.

ACTION: Coordinate with and support the Niagara River Greenway by working with partners to implement its trail system and interpretive vision within the boundaries of the National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Actively support and promote top-priority projects that implement the vision and program outlined in the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

The Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor was established by Congress in 2000 and is the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's sister heritage area in Western New York. Extending 524 miles across upstate New York from Whitehall to Buffalo, the heritage corridor follows the historic route of the Erie Canal and its tributaries, interpreting the region's history, culture, and environment.

As noted in its guidebook, the Western Erie Region features the longest section of the canal that still follows its original path and retains its historic relationship to the communities and landscapes along its banks. Lockport and Tonawanda/North Tonawanda are primary communities along the heritage corridor that feature historic sites and interpretation.

As national heritage areas, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor should work together to communicate the heritage area concept to residents of Niagara and Erie Counties and work with state and national heritage areas state-wide on issues of common concern.

Interpretively, the two national heritage areas should coordinate at the management level to relate their heritage area-wide interpretive presentations. They should coordinate at the local level by encouraging and supporting local sites in coordinating interpretation around themes of common interest.

ACTION: Work with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor on communicating the heritage area concept to residents of Niagara and Erie Counties. Work with other state and national heritage areas state-wide on issues of common concern.

ACTION: Coordinate Niagara Falls and Erie Canalway heritage area-wide interpretive presentations and local interpretive presentations around themes of common interest.

Seaway Trail

The Great Lakes Seaway Trail is a scenic byway and touring route that stretches 518 miles along the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Niagara River, and Lake Erie from Massena, New York through Erie, Pennsylvania to the Ohio state line. Designated as one of 'America's Byways,' New York's portion of the byway is coordinated and managed by Seaway Trail, Inc. based in Sackets Harbor. Seaway Trail, Inc. coordinates partners, advocates for and promotes the byway, and undertakes byway planning, interpretation, and marketing projects.

The Niagara Region is a featured destination along the Seaway Trail, and includes both the City of Niagara Falls and the Lower Niagara River. Implementation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will create a stronger destination and visitor experience for travelers along the Seaway Trail and will support byway goals related to stewardship, interpretation, tourism, and transportation.

Within the national heritage area the Seaway Trail follows Route 18F (Lake Road, Main Street, and River Road) from Lake Ontario south through Youngstown and Lewiston to Route 104 (Lewiston Road and Main Street) through Niagara Falls. In downtown Niagara Falls, the byway follows Rainbow Boulevard to the John B. Daley Boulevard, where it joins the Robert Moses Parkway west to Route 384 (Buffalo Avenue) at the Route 190 bridge. The Seaway Trail then follows Route 384 (Buffalo Avenue and River Road) through LaSalle south to Tonawanda.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should actively coordinate its activities with Seaway Trail, Inc. In collaboration with heritage area partners, Seaway Trail should begin promoting the heritage area as a single destination rather than as separate Niagara Falls and Lower Niagara River areas. In part, this will require collaboration between the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation and Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce in terms of advertising, promotion, and presentation within the Seaway Trail.

ACTION: Support goals, policies, and programs of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail through implementation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area management plan.

ACTION: Present the unified national heritage area as a single destination and visitor experience along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.

Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy manages the network of Olmsted-conceived parks and parkways within the city of Buffalo through a public/private partnership. Restoration of the parks and parkways is guided by the Conservancy's master plan (the Olmsted City, Buffalo's Olmsted Parks *Plan for the 21st Century*) that promotes sustainable management of the park landscapes, restoring them to Olmsted's original vision while meeting the contemporary recreational needs of park users.

In addition to his work in Buffalo, Frederick Law Olmsted is renowned for his leadership in the creation of the Niagara Reservation, the nation's first state park, which saved Niagara Falls. New York State Parks has studied the original design of the Niagara Reservation (now Niagara Falls State Park) and is working to restore Olmsted's vision for the park landscape.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and its participating partner, New York State Parks, should collaborate with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy in interpretation of Olmsted's vision regionally. In the vicinity of Niagara Falls State Park, the themes *Natural Phenomenon* and *Tourism and Recreation* should interpret the Free Niagara movement, Niagara Reservation, and landscape stewardship today. In this interpretation, connections should be drawn to Olmsted's related vision and work in Buffalo. In Buffalo, the Conservancy should draw interpretive connections to the Niagara Reservation. Together, both should relate Olmsted's vision to today's Niagara River Greenway.

With inspiration form Olmsted, the heritage area should support stewardship of the state and local parks along the Niagara River including linkages and enhancements as envisioned in the Greenway Plan and city Comprehensive Plan. The Conservancy's 2008 master plan and its guiding principles should serve as a model for park and landscape stewardship within the heritage area.

ACTION: Support New York State Park's study and rehabilitation of the Olmsted-inspired landscape of the historic Niagara Reservation.

ACTION: Collaborate with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy on regional interpretation and programming on Olmsted's vision and work.

Destination Marketing Organizations

Chapter 3 of this management plan, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*, discusses visitor experience, marketing, and promotion within the heritage area and recommends a regional collaboration between the Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation, Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit Buffalo Niagara), and The Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce. Together, these three organizations should collaborate

with Niagara Falls Canada Visitor and Convention Bureau, its parent organization Niagara Falls Tourism Association, and the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance in promoting the Niagara Region to the world.

These destination marketing organizations play an important role in introducing interpretive concepts and opportunities to visitors planning their trips and therefore have an important impact upon the region's identity in the public's mind. In Niagara County, one of the most important itineraries for visitors is the Niagara Wine Trail. These organizations should develop ways to jointly promote sites and itineraries thematically on a regional scale. In Niagara and Erie Counties, the heritage area's themes should be used as a basis for organizing interpretive promotion and information for visitors.

ACTION: Use interpretive themes as a means of presenting the Niagara Region to potential visitors and linking communities, sites, and interpretive opportunities at a regional scale.

ACTION: Partner with the Niagara Wine Trail as a primary tourism itinerary within the region in presenting the story of agriculture and the landscape in conjunction with the theme *Natural Phenomenon*.

2.4.2 Thematic Partners

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area can collaborate on a regional basis with individual interpretive sites associated with any of the heritage area's interpretive themes. The 2005 Niagara National Heritage Area Study lists a number of sites and resources in Niagara and Erie Counties that are associated with heritage area's themes. Some of the listed sites are part of the regional collaborations discussed in the preceding section of this chapter, such as sites associated with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. During the management plan process, representatives of several interpretive sites attended Commission meetings and expressed their interest in participating in the heritage area program. These included the "Das Haus" German Heritage Museum in Bergholz and the North Tonawanda History Museum.

For each of its interpretive themes, the heritage area should identify sites in Niagara and Erie Counties that could collaborate with presentation of the theme on a regional basis. The Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation and Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau (Visit Buffalo Niagara) should take the lead in identifying and helping to organize these sites, as suggested in the preceding section.

Based upon the range of sites available and their interest in participating, interpretation should be coordinated between the heritage area, groups of thematically related sites, and each individual site. Together, the heritage area and the sites should prepare regional itineraries and interpretive materials by theme. The Niagara 1812 Legacy Council's fold-out interpretive map is a good example of the type of interpretive materials that could be considered.

Each participating site should be expected to enter into a partnership agreement with the heritage area, agreeing to abide by partnership principles and guidelines and agreeing to include information on the heritage area and its regional presentation onsite, on its

website, and in published information. The sites should be included in the regional context presented as part of the heritage area's interpretation of each theme. The heritage area should maintain a regional presentation of sites by theme on its website.

The strongest potential thematic associations in Niagara and Erie Counties are those related to the themes *Natural Phenomenon, Power and Industry,* and *Underground Railroad*. Sites associated with the theme *Natural Phenomenon* can include any site interpreting the region's natural history. Interpretation related to the Niagara River Greenway, discussed above, is particularly appropriate for a regional initiative.

The City of Buffalo is closely associated with the theme *Power and Industry*, and interpretation of the theme is led by the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society. A strong presentation of Buffalo's industrial history could be created and associated with the heritage area in collaboration with the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society and related sites.

Because they area intended for movement and because of the secretive nature of sites historically associated with the Underground Railroad, a number of interpretive sites related to the theme are located in rural areas of Niagara and Erie Counties, such as Murphy Orchards.

Individual sites interested in participating in the heritage area program should meet the following criteria:

- Be an authentic historic site and/or a museum;
- Be clearly associated with one of the heritage area's interpretive themes;
- Be publicly accessible;
- Offer onsite interpretation (can be exhibits or personal services);
- Have regular hours of operation.

To become involved, individual sites should submit an expression of interest to the heritage area Commission. The expression of interest should outline:

- The site's concept related to heritage area participation;
- The site's vision, mission, and goals;
- A brief self-assessment describing operations, facilities, and existing interpretation; and
- A description of how the site meets the criteria listed above.

ACTION: Develop an ongoing process through which additional sites in Niagara and Erie Counties that could collaborate with the presentation of each heritage area theme on a regional basis may be identified.

ACTION: Within that process, create a procedure through which interested thematically related interpretive sites in Niagara and Erie Counties can apply to participate in the heritage area program, including appropriate criteria, requirements, and guidelines.

ACTION: As part of the heritage area's interpretation of each theme, include presentation of the regional context including participating interpretive sites.

ACTION: Implement regional interpretive initiatives for the most promising themes and subjects in collaboration with regional partners.

Costumed interpreters *at Old Fort Niagara*

Chapter 3 – Niagara's Visitor Experience

This chapter includes recommended actions to enhance the visitor experience in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. The actions are accompanied by guidance to assist the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission in implementing them; the last section discusses indicators that can be used to evaluate results. The actions outlined in this section include both tourism development recommendations to improve the visitor experience and tourism marketing recommendations to promote the National Heritage Area to travelers.

It is anticipated that the Commission and heritage area partners ("the heritage area") will initially focus on the enhancement of the visitor experience to provide a consistent, high-quality regional experience. After such enhancements are put into place, the heritage area will increase its emphasis on marketing activities. As assistance and funds are made available through the heritage area, the primary investment and emphasis will be devoted to tourism development infrastructure improvements in the area between Niagara Falls State Park and Old Fort Niagara. Thematically related attractions in Niagara and Erie Counties outside the heritage area will also be included in regional visitor experience packages, itineraries, and other tourism products and marketing materials to create a richer, even more compelling visitor experience for travelers.

The goals outlined in this visitor experience chapter are in line with the tourism industry focus outlined in an economic development study released in November 2011, *A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York*. The study notes that "quality tourism products are underdeveloped, and as a result, WNY largely remains a hidden gem in an industry sector that is ripe for growth" (p. 44). The study also names "arts, culture, history, architecture, natural resources and world wonders like Niagara Falls" as some of the region's competitive strengths for the global tourism market (p. 44). It encourages greater collaboration and coordination (including greater inter-county support structures) and maximum use of existing assets to move tourism forward by:

- Increasing the number of visitors;
- Extending the length of stay;
- Encouraging repeat visitation; and
- Improving the region's image.

The study encourages Western New York to strive for greater consistency in:

- Offering a high-quality visitor experience;
- Improving wayfinding;
- Enhancing gateways; and
- Increasing capital investment in regional assets.

The primary goal for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's visitor experience is "to offer and promote authentic regional heritage tourism opportunities that communicate a unified message and provide visitors with transformational experiences." To accomplish this goal, the Commission will work with partners to promote the National Heritage

Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative for Niagara's Visitor Experience

The Commission's preferred alternative included the following conceptual approach to help achieve the goal for Niagara's visitor experience:

- *Collaborate with partners to develop and implement **programs, incentives, and standards for improving the overall visitor experience.***
- *Collaborate with partners in creating **satellite orientation centers** in Lewiston and Youngstown.*
- *Create an independent **website** providing a "virtual heritage area" that can be experienced world-wide; providing the **social media applications needed to direct traffic** to the website; linking to partner websites; interfacing with the Niagara USA website.*
- ***Brand and promote** the National Heritage Area.*
- *Implement a **comprehensive wayfinding system** integrated with social media, GPS and digital mapping, and other technologies.*
- *Create maps for **walking and driving tours**.*
- *Play a major role in creating a **high-quality visitor experience along the river corridor** by assisting attractions, sites, and communities **with authentic, accurate, and engaging interpretive programs.***
- *Collaborate with existing organizations in developing and implementing **programs and standards for improving the overall visitor experience.***
- *Establish a **certified quality designation** and logo that can be displayed by qualifying businesses and attractions.*
- *Create a program to **train and certify guides** to assist visitors and tour operators.*
- *Coordinate with existing transportation services to **assure multi-modal access** including pedestrian, bicycle, personal vehicle, rental car, and tour buses and visitor shuttles.*

Area as an opportunity for a deeper, more meaningful experience along the Niagara River Gorge. The Commission will also work with public and private partners to develop programs, incentives, and standards that will improve the overall visitor experience and link attractions together into a cohesive visitor experience.

While the recommended actions outlined below include both tourism marketing and tourism product development, it is anticipated that in many cases National Heritage Area will play a leadership role for tourism product development and a supporting role for tourism marketing. Between the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Buffalo Niagara) alone, millions of dollars are already being invested annually in marketing the Niagara Falls region. Conversely, there are no regional partners focused entirely on tourism product development for the Niagara Falls region. Thus, focusing on this role and the opportunity for collaborative partnerships that build bridges between different constituencies will be a primary focus for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's efforts related to the visitor experience.

Of all the tourism infrastructure needs discussed during stakeholder interviews, transportation rose to the top as one of the largest challenges. Accordingly, the recommendations below include actions to address transportation through the development of multi-modal transportation offerings. A quality standards program to encourage and reward excellence, a region-wide hospitality training program, and a regional tourism pass are other critical steps the National Heritage Area can take toward addressing key tourism challenges. The development of supporting products and promotional efforts will round out the National Heritage Area's activities to expand and improve the Niagara visitor experience.

3.1 Guiding Principles for Heritage Tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present." The National Trust's Heritage Tourism Program has also developed five guiding principles for successful and sustainable cultural heritage tourism programs, including efforts such as national heritage areas. These five principles provide a framework for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's tourism efforts related to Niagara's visitor experience:

1) Collaborate: The value of the collective National Heritage Area is greater than the sum of its parts. By working together in partnership toward shared goals that benefit everyone, much more can be accomplished than by working alone.

2) **Make Sites and Programs Come Alive:** Cultural heritage travelers have higher expectations, and it is vital that the visitor experiences offered to these travelers are exciting and engaging so they stay longer, plan return visits, and encourage others to visit as well.

3) **Focus on Authenticity and Quality:** Cultural heritage travelers have higher expectations when they travel, and they are looking for high-quality, authentic experiences.

4) **Find the Fit between the Community and Tourism:** A good cultural heritage tourism effort makes the destination a better place to live as well as a better place to visit.

5) **Preserve and Protect Resources:** The natural, historic and cultural resources that led to the designation of this region as the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area are irreplaceable treasures. If lost, they can never be replaced. Preservation and conservation need to be a core ethic for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

3.2 Image: Tourism Branding and Messaging

While travelers around the world are familiar with Niagara Falls, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is new and not yet well known. This designation has the potential to bring the credibility of the National Heritage Area program and the National Park Service (NPS) to the American side of Niagara Falls, and further create a regional identity that encourages travelers to stay longer and explore beyond the Falls themselves. Establishing a credible brand that is recognized by residents and visitors alike as a mark of quality will be essential to the success of the heritage area's efforts. While the international name recognition of Niagara Falls makes the Falls a highly desirable "hook" for tourism marketing efforts, creating awareness of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and building on the credibility of this National Park Service designation will provide an added incentive for extended stays and return visits to the region.

The National Park Service is currently developing guidance for how its graphic identity can be used on materials that are developed as a product of a relationship with the NPS. These guidelines should be monitored and factored in and included as part of the branding and messaging strategy to emphasize the National Heritage Area's NPS connection.

As a part of the heritage area's graphic identity and branding, icons can be used to identify attractions that support one or more of the interpretive themes. In addition, by associating a specific color with each icon or theme, color can be used to denote heritage trails or routes in online and printed materials for each interpretive theme. For example, a map might use the corresponding color for the *Power and Industry* theme to indicate the route for a Power and Industry heritage trail, or the heading for a listing of *Natural Phenomenon* attractions might incorporate the color associated with the Natural Phenomenon theme. Both icons and color can be useful in supporting various wayfinding approaches, and in helping to establish the National Heritage Area's physical presence.

An important element of branding and messaging is the digital world. Currently, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is represented on the NPS's website. This is a critical first step in branding, but a website supported through the NPS has operational and organizational limits. A second website would complement the information available through the NPS site. Going beyond websites, it is becoming more and more important to engage in social media. Because trends are evolving rapidly, use of social media will need to be assessed and modified frequently. A specific need is to assess the effectiveness of using Facebook as a way to reach out to "fans" of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area to promote events and encourage repeat visits versus creating an email contact list for online outreach.

A critical concept for branding and messaging is to present participating attractions and tourism services in the heritage area as a unified regional tourism product. The NTCC will identify ways to create awareness of the National Heritage Area and its brand through the NTCC's marketing efforts, working toward mutual goals. Currently, the NTCC divides attractions in the county into four regions: the Falls Region, River Region, Lake Region, and Canal Region. The NTCC will need to find the most effective way to showcase the National Heritage Area within this system. While the heritage area's attractions are primarily clustered in the Falls Region and the River Region, it does not include all the attractions in these two regions. It is also possible that additional thematically related sites in the Lake or Canal region (or thematically related attractions in Erie County) could be included as part of the heritage area. For these reasons, the NTCC expects to treat the heritage area designation as an overlay to the existing tourism regions, adapting its existing online and print promotional materials as appropriate; a content management system (CMS) on its website, for example, could be developed to allow visitors to filter tourism listings, either by NTCC region or by the heritage area. The quality standards program outlined in a section below could be another way to differentiate heritage area attractions, events, and visitor services from other tourism listings for Niagara County.

Heritage-area-wide promotional materials available to visitors once they arrive (or available online ahead of time) are also ways to present heritage area offerings as a unified product. The National Heritage Area brochure and map described in the wayfinding section below is an example. Another idea is to develop a seasonal guide to the National Heritage Area using the NPS newsletter format used in national parks. In addition to including articles about the National Heritage Area that are designed to encourage visitors to stay longer, it could include a schedule of activities and events.

ACTION: Brand and position the heritage area by completing the logo design for the National Heritage Area and an accompanying messaging strategy; and ensuring correct and accurate usage of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area brand at different scales, in different formats, and for different uses by local partners.

ACTION: Create icons graphically related to the logo that represent the National Heritage Area's four interpretive themes in order to support wayfinding and help establish the heritage area's physical presence.

ACTION: Create an independent website for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area that reflects the brand and messaging.

ACTION: Take advantage of trends in social media, creating a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Yelp, and other appropriate social media applications.

ACTION: Evaluate the use of Facebook's feature allowing "fans" to self-identify as a first step or element of support in developing a following of "friends" of the National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Present participating attractions and tourism services in the heritage area as a unified regional tourism product.

ACTION: Develop a seasonal guide to the National Heritage Area using the NPS newsletter format.

3.3 Quality Standards for Attractions, Events, and Visitor Services

The designation program described here offers broad opportunities for partners to work with the Commission. In particular, it includes incentives for attractions, events, and visitor services to improve their offerings in order to achieve the highest level of designation through the National Heritage Area's quality standards program. The quality standards program will also help discerning travelers identify high-quality, authentic experiences in the National Heritage Area.

3.3.1 Setting Standards, Identifying Responsibilities and Benefits

The proposed two-level quality standards program here includes a basic level for "Partners" designed to be as inclusive as possible, encouraging broad-based engagement and involvement with the National Heritage Area. In addition, a more exclusive "Signature" level will be offered with more demanding requirements and a more robust package of benefits. The Signature designation will recognize excellence and will provide an incentive for Partners to invest in improving the visitor experience to work toward the higher "Signature" designation.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission will be responsible for approving and adopting the final standards, responsibilities, and benefits for participants. Listed below are criteria, responsibilities, and benefits to provide a starting point for designing the program.

Criteria for the Partner or Signature level of designation could include requirements to:

- Be located within the heritage area's designated boundaries in Niagara County (or be thematically related to the heritage area in Niagara or Erie counties);
- Be interested in and willing to be considered a heritage area Partner or Signature attraction, event, or visitor service;
- Be open to the public on a regular basis;
- Provide a visitor experience that helps to tell the stories included in the heritage area's interpretive themes;
- Contribute to a positive visitor experience;
- Offer a high-quality, authentic visitor experience;

- Have staff or volunteers who are knowledgeable about the heritage area;
- Be willing to share information about other Partner or Signature attractions, events, and services; and
- Participate in the Ambassador training program offered by the National Heritage Area.

Benefits for Partner or Signature attractions, services, or events could include:

- Credibility and mark of quality that comes with association with the National Heritage Area and NPS. This designation could be the "Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval" for participating programs;
- Social and networking opportunities for participants;
- Ability to tap into volunteer Ambassador assistance or Junior Ambassador summer interns;
- Ability to apply for heritage area grants, or alternatively, priority consideration for heritage area grants;
- Inclusion in all heritage area marketing materials; and
- Visibility through public relations and marketing efforts, including an annual event or an awards program to recognize stellar efforts.

Benefits could also include the opportunity to request a visitor readiness assessment to help identify strengths and areas where the site could improve the current visitor experience. Such assessments could be provided by NPS staff on detail and/or by other local, regional or national experts, and might be made available to applicants as technical assistance in a pre-application phase. Another possible benefit for participating sites would be the opportunity to apply for National Heritage Area grants to implement visitor readiness recommendations as appropriate, or alternatively the assessment team might recommend alternative funding sources for implementation.

In identifying the final standards and benefits for each level, it will be important to ensure that the benefits are strong enough to balance the requirements and responsibilities of the quality standards program. The Commission should also ensure that the standards are not so stringent that it excludes a critical mass of participants. At the same time, the Commission should ensure that the standards are not so loose that the quality standards lose credibility and meaning for both participants and visitors. In any quality standards program, it is preferable to start with more restrictive standards and loosen them over time as appropriate. It is much easier to add new designations than it is to take away an existing designation.

3.3.2 Creating a Process

The Commission will develop a process to identify and invite appropriate attractions, events, and visitor services to participate in the quality standards program. A formal agreement between the National Heritage Area and each partnering entity will ensure mutual understanding of the responsibilities and benefits of designation. It is anticipated that the "Signature" level will set a high bar for inclusion and will have a smaller number of participants.

The Commission's Tourism Committee is the logical body to undertake the initial and ongoing review for Partner and Signature designations, making recommendations to the Commission for final approval. To avoid any conflict of interest, Commission members representing any specific attractions, events, or visitor services under consideration for designation must recuse themselves from discussion and approval for that applicant. For those applicants determined to not meet the quality standards, the Commission should explain the rationale for the determination. In some cases, the determination will be final – for example, if the site is outside of the heritage area's boundaries or it does not support the heritage area's interpretive themes (or both). In other cases, the Commission may outline specific issues that the applicant needs to address before being reconsidered for inclusion.

Early on, a consideration for the Commission is how to offer a well-rounded set of participating attractions, events, and visitor services. It may be necessary to undertake a modest amount of recruitment and technical assistance to encourage early participation; if so, every effort should be made to avoid any appearance of favoritism.

In addition to reviewing new applications for Partner and Signature designation, the Commission must also regularly review participants to make sure that they continue to meet the requirements of the Quality Standards program and to encourage Partners to achieve Signature designation, perhaps every five years. Routine efforts to encourage achievement and ensure compliance could include an evaluation report shared with the participant with suggested ways to address deficiencies or move to the next level. The Commission will have the ability to revoke a Partner or Signature designation in cases where deficiencies are not resolved.

ACTION: Develop and adopt criteria for a two-level National Heritage Area quality standards program to designate attractions, events, and visitor services.

ACTION: Invite attractions, events, and visitor services to apply to participate in the quality standards program.

ACTION: Monitor the status of attractions, events, and visitor services that have been designated at the Partner and Signature levels.

ACTION: Offer visitor readiness assessments.

3.4 Wayfinding

Navigating between attractions within the National Heritage Area is challenging. Printed materials, GPS applications, and signage can help to alleviate wayfinding challenges. Because 65 percent of Niagara Falls domestic travelers arrive by car, providing wayfinding tools will be an important component of an overall strategy to encourage these travelers to stay longer and explore more of the region. Wayfinding also reinforces another objective discussed in a section below, making multi-modal travel part of the fun of visiting the heritage area. Wayfinding must be geared to drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists for both roads and trails. The inclusion of mileage, especially in signage, would reinforce visitors' understanding of the close proximity of attractions within the region.

Ultimately, a seamless and coordinated system of wayfinding throughout the National Heritage Area should emerge. It may be necessary for the Commission to establish a comprehensive wayfinding plan addressing signage, online and printed wayfinding materials, smartphone applications, and other ways to guide visitors, such as the icons mentioned in the branding section above. Since others in the region, however – including those represented on the Commission – are also deeply concerned with this need, it may be sufficient to establish solid working relationships with others to address it and monitor the emergence of a heritage strategy through a section in the Commission's work plan.

3.4.1 Basic Wayfinding Tools

Maps should be among the first wayfinding tools developed as, in either printed or digital form, they can be less expensive to produce and easier to update than more permanent wayfinding tools such as signage. Maps providing individual or community-based walking and driving tours would complement regional maps produced by the NTCC by providing more in-depth information to help visitors experience historic sites and districts that may be less visitor-ready than established attractions. The map(s) would highlight attractions and include information about the National Heritage Area and its four interpretive themes. In addition to showing travel routes to reach each attraction, descriptions of the attractions could include the distance from Niagara Falls State Park as an additional point of reference. A particular need expressed during management planning interviews is the creation of a detailed map and guide to trails along the Niagara River, which will need to be updated periodically as access and interpretation are expanded.

A single fold-out, four-color map brochure that includes color-coded walking and driving tours and additional interpretive information about attractions is a traditional product provided by national heritage areas, similar to what is provided by national parks. The heritage area must consider whether a full-blown map is possible early on, or whether production of more individualized maps would be a useful first step to build information and experience.

GPS technology and smart phone applications can provide electronic and online wayfinding tools. The heritage area will need to develop applications that are the best fit for National Heritage Area visitors and monitor changes in technology to keep up with trends. Multi-platform content that can be provided to visitors in different ways will make maximum use of the skills and information that must be developed to undertake this wayfinding task effectively.

ACTION: Develop walking, biking, and driving tours with maps to show different routes throughout the National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Create a detailed map and guide to trails along the Niagara River.

ACTION: Develop a fold-out, four-color map brochure for the National Heritage Area that includes walking and driving tours and additional interpretive information about attractions.

ACTION: Tap into GPS technology and smart phone applications to provide electronic and online wayfinding tools and multi-platform content.

3.4.2 Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signage can complement printed maps and online wayfinding tools. As signage provides direction to drivers on the road at key decision points, it is one of the most effective means to help visitors navigate through unfamiliar territory. It also provides a physical presence that could potentially unify the heritage area if designed as a system.

A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York highlights the establishment of a regional wayfinding sign system as one component of the region's tourism agenda. The study recommends that Western New York "establish a state-federal-local working committee to develop a demonstration project for a regional wayfinding system for cultural, recreational and other tourism-related destinations that would provide clear and effective information for roads and streets; promote an aesthetically positive and unique image for the region; and meet current standards for wayfinding signage" (p. 45). The Commission is a logical member of such a committee, especially since at least three wayfinding sign programs are currently under development in the heritage area (City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls State Park, and Lewiston), with a wayfinding sign system also called for in the Niagara River Greenway plan; all of these entities participate through representation on the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission.

ACTION: Advocate for consistency among wayfinding programs currently under development (in the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls State Park, and Lewiston); seek to include linkages to attractions and destinations outside of those jurisdictions.

ACTION: Work with attractions and communities to provide a seamless and coordinated system of wayfinding throughout the National Heritage Area.

3.5 Hospitality Training

This section describes a program to train hospitality staff and volunteers to ensure quality and consistency in information provided to visitors; a more intensive interpretive program with similar intent, training "Certified Guides," is described in Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*. By actively encouraging better customer service across the region, the heritage area will be able to elevate the quality of the visitor experience to encourage more repeat visitation.

We are adopting the name "Ambassador" from the program already in use at Niagara University. Current training in the region includes Niagara University's customer service training program for front-line employees and volunteers, which includes a two-hour course offered for a nominal registration fee. The NTCC offers a shorter training program for front-line employees and volunteers as well as other tourism industry personnel that focuses primarily on what there is to see and do in the region. The NTCC training is free, takes less than an hour, is frequently offered on site, and often includes refreshments as an added enticement to encourage participation. In addition, other attractions throughout the region have their own volunteer programs.

There are several other firms in the United States that offer hospitality training at the national and international levels. One other National Heritage Area, the Journey Through

Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, currently participates in the Certified Tourism Ambassador® program offered through the Tourism Ambassador Institute. The CTA® program includes an initial enrollment fee as well as an annual renewal fee, and certification includes reading assignments, a classroom session, and a test. While the enrollment and renewal fees vary from city to city, they are generally under $49 per year for the participant, with local tourism industry stakeholders subsidizing the remainder of the cost of bringing the CTA® program to the destination. In addition to the annual enrollment fee, renewing this annual certification requires earning points by visiting attractions, attending events, or completing reading assignments.

As the heritage area has hospitality training expertise available locally through Niagara University as well as the potential to incorporate National Park Service training materials and expertise, participation in this national certification program may not be necessary. The proposed umbrella "Ambassador" program described below will complement and unify existing volunteer and staff training programs currently operating in a variety of locations throughout the region. Participation will be optional, though encouraged through the prestige of the program, value of the training, and social opportunities provided through special events and offers.

For many hospitality and customer service training programs, the greatest challenge is getting those who need the training most to participate. Employers can be reluctant to pay wages for an employee's time to attend training programs, and employees often do not have the personal incentive to participate in hospitality training on their own time. To encourage maximum participation, it will be critical to keep the length of the training programs as short as possible, make the training free or very affordable, emphasize the "fun factor" in the training itself, and provide a benefits package for participating Ambassadors that creates an incentive to complete the training and stay involved. The heritage area may want to offer both on-site training for the convenience of employees as well as training courses open to staff and volunteers region-wide to encourage more networking and collaboration.

Other destinations have worked to encourage participation in the following ways:

- In Virginia, promoting the training as a "Pig Pickin'" and including a barbeque as part of the training.
- In Colorado, developing a board game similar to Trivial Pursuit with a deck of cards that includes questions and answers about questions commonly asked by visitors.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Ambassador training program could include several components:

- A basic Ambassador hospitality training program for front line tourism staff and volunteers as well as other tourism industry personnel;
- A more intensive Certified Guide training that includes the basic Ambassador hospitality training;
- An option for experienced staff and guides to go through an accelerated version of the Ambassador program (possibly including self-study of the training manual and an exam); and

- A Junior Ambassador program that encourages local youth to complete the training and become involved in the tourism industry in Niagara Falls.

To remain an active Ambassador, volunteers and staff should be required to participate in a minimum number of events or refresher trainings on a regular basis. The benefits package offered to Ambassadors should be commensurate with the requirements to remain an active Ambassador or Certified Guide. The benefits package could include perks such as:

- Discounts at participating local restaurants and retail establishments;
- Free passes to heritage area attractions;
- A free annual pass for the heritage area shuttle service for active Ambassadors;
- Options to participate in Ambassador events, programs, or special offers (for example, qualified Ambassadors might be offered same-day tickets to a concert within the heritage area with unsold seats or discounts to local restaurants, or an attraction might host a volunteer appreciation party for Ambassadors); and
- Special recognition for years of service in the Ambassador Program (for example, dinner for two at the a popular heritage area restaurant in recognition of five years of service, or an overnight package at a premium hotel in the heritage area in recognition of ten years of service).

Development of a hospitality program could unfold in two steps. First, the Commission could work with Niagara University, Niagara County Community College, and NPS to develop and pilot a curriculum for an umbrella hospitality training program. This could be designed to provide additional training to existing staff and volunteers and also investigate ideas for cultivating an expanded pool of trained volunteers. Existing NU and NPS training materials can be made available in hard copy or online and NU, NCCC, and NPS staff and others could provide their combined expertise as faculty. Target audiences for initial participation include those participating in existing volunteer programs, such as the Niagara University Ambassadors who staff the convention center and the NTCC volunteers who work in the City of Niagara Falls, as well as volunteer programs offered at other attractions throughout the National Heritage Area. The heritage area should consider offering training courses in different locations and/or on site for the employees and volunteers of a specific business or attraction.

Second, once the test program is evaluated and adjustments made, training courses could be offered on a regular basis. As front line employees have a high turnover rate, consider offering Ambassador training on a frequent basis. At a minimum, Ambassador training should be offered at the beginning of each tourism season, and it may be desirable to offer an additional training program mid-season as well. To encourage broad participation, consider perks that can be offered as part of the training programs such as food or entertainment offered at the beginning or end of the training, or discount offers or free tickets or offers to heritage area attractions, events or services for individuals who successfully complete the training program.

Trained Ambassadors should be provided with a an easily recognizable emblem to indicate that they have completed this training, such as a button, badge, T-shirt, hat, or vest with the National Heritage Area logo. In addition, Ambassadors should be provided with visible sign to recognize hours of active service, such as star or bar pins, or a listing on a name tag, to designate the number of years in the program. Consider creating added incentives or benefits for Ambassadors who reach key benchmarks, such as five or ten years of active participation.

To supplement the Ambassador training program, refresher training workshops as well as fun events and special offers should be perks of being a trained Ambassador. This could include awards for outstanding Ambassadors, special behind-the-scenes events with refreshments and raffles for prizes, or other networking opportunities for Ambassadors. Networking opportunities could include social gatherings as well as social networking opportunities in the "Partner" section of the National Heritage Area website.

ACTION: Develop an umbrella hospitality training and retention program designed to provide additional training to existing staff and volunteers and cultivate an expanded pool of trained volunteers.

3.6 Packaging Attractions

Creating a strong package of attractions on the American side of the Falls will help demonstrate a critical mass of things to see and do for the heritage traveler, thus helping to extend the length of stay. This topic features two concepts – regional passes on the American side of Niagara Falls, building on the success of Niagara Falls State Park's Discovery Pass; plus customized packages and suggested itineraries to be developed with partners for target audiences as additional incentives to extend stays and increase travel in the shoulder and off seasons. Events are another way to create a sense of energy and excitement to draw visitors to the region in the shoulder or off seasons.

3.6.1 Creating Regional Passes

In studying the feasibility of a regional pass for the American side of Niagara Falls, consider a balance among the interpretive goals of the National Heritage Area, the marketability of attractions and their willingness to participate, and combinations of attractions at a price point that will have the greatest appeal. While the specific attractions and business model will need to be tested and developed before the most feasible format is identified, possible models might include:

- A regional "Explorer Pass" that incorporates the Discovery Pass with other Signature and Partner attractions in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area (possibly including thematically related sites in Niagara and Erie counties and the heritage area shuttle service).

- Two regional pass options, an "Explorer Pass" that focuses on heritage and culture and an "Adventure Pass" that focuses on nature and recreation. Both passes would include a multi-day pass for the heritage area shuttle service. The "Explorer Pass" might include historical and cultural attractions that interpret the themes of power and industry as well as borders and borderland crossings, while the "Adventure Pass" would focus on interpreting the themes of the natural phenomena of the Falls and the history of tourism and recreation. Thus sites such as Old Fort Niagara, Power Vista, the Buffalo and Erie County

Historical Society, and the newly restored Customhouse might be included in the "Explorer Pass" along with the Discovery Pass sites and a guidebook with additional walking tours and interpretive information. The "Adventure Pass" might include the Whirlpool Jet Boats, the Buffalo harbor cruise, discounts on bicycle rentals, and a guide to hiking and biking trails along with the Discovery Pass.

In either model, while the primary focus should be on attractions between Niagara Falls and Old Fort Niagara in Niagara County, additional sites in Niagara and Erie counties related to the four interpretive themes for the National Heritage Area would be considered for inclusion. A compelling combination ticket must include a strong selection of highly desirable attractions as well as shuttle transportation to create a marketable package. Attractions featured as part of the pass should be ticketed attractions with extensive hours of operation that contribute to the National Heritage Area visitor experience and help to tell the stories of the heritage area outlined in the interpretive themes. To highlight less-developed attractions, it could be possible to develop a companion heritage area guidebook that is provided as part of the regional pass.

The existing conditions section of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Management Plan describes other passes such as the Discovery Pass and the Canadian Power Pass. For example, the Power Pass features 20 attractions and can be purchased as a 1-day, 2-day, 3-day or 5-day pass at different price points. The Commission must work with public and private partners to develop a feasibility study based on market research and then a business plan to develop competitive features similar to these existing passes. The business plan should identify participating partners, price points, budget and sales projections, marketing strategies, technology needs, and additional considerations to make the pass viable, such as determining the importance of shuttle transportation to the pass's viability and incentives for tour operators to market tickets. Dedicating a portion of regional pass sales to supporting the National Heritage Area's work to enhance the visitor experience should also be a consideration. A pilot program for the regional pass concept with a target audience or at a targeted time of year (for example, during fall foliage season) would help to test the business plan's viability. If the program is deemed viable following testing, the new pass could be promoted through attractions in the National Heritage Area, visitor bureaus, tour operators, and other marketing channels.

ACTION: Conduct a study and develop a business plan to determine the feasibility of one or more regional passes that combine the attractions featured in the Discovery Pass along with other attractions on the American side of the Falls.

ACTION: If the regional pass concept is found to be feasible, launch the pass as a multi-day alternative to the Discovery Pass to encourage longer stays on the American side of Niagara Falls.

3.6.2 Creating Packages and Itineraries

Packages and suggested itineraries developed with partners for target audiences can provide additional incentives to visitors to extend their stay and or decide to travel in the shoulder and off seasons. Heritage travelers enjoy taking part in a variety of different kinds of activities when they travel, and in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area there is a wide variety of possibilities. For example, packages along the Niagara River Gorge might feature or combine biking, hiking, *plein air* painting, cooking classes,

birdwatching, photography, historical reenactments, and other complementary activities. The National Heritage Area should work with tourism partners to promote packages. Packages available during the shoulder and off seasons as well as packages during the high season are important, as are suggested one-day and multi-day itineraries designed to encourage longer stays in the National Heritage Area by independent travelers who may want to create or customize their own packages.

Potential partners that could develop, customize, and market packages for visitors to the National Heritage Area include lodging establishments and small businesses that cater to visitors. Lodging establishments, in particular, since the cost of overnight stays is a large part of any visitor's costs, are important partners. While packages "at cost" are worth doing simply for attracting visitors looking for convenience and fresh experiences, lodging establishments are in the best position to develop a total package cost that is competitive with travelers' ability to put together their own combinations. That is, if they can develop enough total business from packages, they can offer packages at a discount.

There are many kinds of small businesses that could greatly improve the visitor experience and participate in packages, such as caterers who provide picnic meals, bike rental agencies, mobile food vendors along bike trails, bicycle shops, outfitters, and galleries. Providing value-added "cultural concierge" services is another business opportunity; such services create individualized packages and itineraries for National Heritage Area travelers; they could be operated as concessions located in the orientation centers in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown.

ACTION: Work with partners to create packages and itineraries that combine attractions within the heritage area to appeal to heritage travelers.

ACTION: Encourage the development of small businesses to enhance the visitor experience.

ACTION: Work with partners to provide "cultural concierge" services to help create customized packages and itineraries for National Heritage Area travelers

3.7 Transportation Options

Transportation has been a major challenge for the Niagara Falls region, especially as public transportation options within Niagara County are quite limited for travelers without access to a car. Although there have been a number of public and private efforts over the years to address this issue, none has yet fully succeeded in addressing this important need. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is in a unique position to help develop a regional model to address the transportation challenges in Niagara Falls through a public-private partnership effort.

Transit-oriented development is flagged in *A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York* as key part of an economic development strategy to encourage the redevelopment of downtowns and main streets. The report states "WNY seeks to establish a fund aimed at reinvesting in our central business districts, village centers and main streets in accordance with local comprehensive plans…to promote reinvestment in public spaces and the reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings, historic preservation, walkability,

energy efficiency, transit-oriented development, and mixed-use, live/work development." In part, the proposed fund recommended in this study would assist in attracting and encouraging emerging entrepreneurs.

3.7.1 Considering a Shuttle Service

In interviews conducted during the management planning process, local stakeholders mentioned the desirability of transportation shuttles to serve visitors, such as a loop to connect the Niagara Falls State Park, the City of Niagara Fall, Lewiston, Youngstown, and Old Fort Niagara. This loop is the one that falls most directly under the purview of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Ideally, this would include frequent hop-on/hop-off service between locations during the high tourist season. Considerations would include:

- Locations for shuttle stops, and the potential need for additional transportation from shuttle stops to nearby destinations;
- Desired frequency of shuttles;
- Shuttle routes;
- Type and size of shuttles required; and
- Price points for shuttles to be competitive in the Niagara Falls (New York and Ontario) marketplace.

As the shuttle concept is tested, initial efforts might consist of a private concessionaire who provides a schedule of shuttle service using existing buses or vans. Frequency and convenience are critical components to make the shuttle a viable option for travelers to consider. An event to feature alternative modes of transportation along the Niagara River Gorge to create interest in multi-modal transportation could raise awareness during initial efforts. Activities could range from events featuring fuel efficient vehicles to biking, hiking, and walking.

Over time and as funds allow, enhancements could be added to the shuttles and the shuttle service. Possibilities include:

- Shuttle drivers trained to provide informative commentary about the heritage area;
- Photos or displays exhibited on each shuttle;
- Information about National Heritage Area attractions, services. and events available in brochure racks at the front of each shuttle;
- National Heritage Area materials such as Junior Ranger activity books available on the shuttles;
- Living history vignettes taking place on the shuttles during specific events or at certain times of the year;
- Shuttle vehicles customized with a unique appearance or graphic look to serve as mobile advertisements for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and the interpretive themes;

- Opportunities to highlight the *Power and Industry* theme by working with NYPA, NYS or other funding sources to include alternative fuel vehicles as shuttle buses;
- Seat backs with a selection of fun facts or "Did You Know" statements about the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area;
- Orientation exhibits about the National Heritage Area at all shuttle stops;
- Discounted or free passes provided to residents as part of building local awareness about the National Heritage Area, for example, or as a benefit of participating in the proposed Ambassador program, or as a perk offered by local schools to encourage students to learn more about their own community.

Organizing the Business of a Shuttle Service

Potential partners to lead the heritage area effort to address the need for visitor transportation could include but are not limited to the City of Niagara Falls, the NTCC, Niagara County, the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA), Niagara University, Niagara Falls State Park, the New York Power Authority (NYPA), and private tour operators. In developing partnerships, keep in mind the need to balance the financial burden of the shuttle service with the benefits to potential partners, as well as the ability of partners to contribute financially.

If sufficient interest can be generated, a business plan would be the next step, addressing operational costs and marketing strategies. Consider opportunities to promote the shuttle service as a stand-alone ticket as well as a component of an existing or new regional pass. Once the desired parameters for shuttle service are set, a competitive bid process may be used to identify a private concessionaire to operate the shuttle. Exploring funding opportunities to underwrite costs is a part of business planning. For example, consider opportunities for grants or subsidies for alternative fuel vehicles, such as the grants currently offered through New York State for the electrification of vehicles. Testing could be done on peak weekends such as Labor Day, Memorial Day, or the Fourth of July. Alternatively, consider testing the shuttle concept during a fall event featuring alternative modes of transportation along the Niagara River Gorge

ACTION: Work with partners to explore the potential for a public-private partnership to create a high-quality, affordable shuttle service for the Niagara River corridor.

ACTION: If a public-private partnership is found to be feasible, implement the partnership to create a seasonal shuttle service and promote the shuttle's availability.

3.7.1 Other Transportation Options

The list of transportation options for the heritage area to pursue only begins with the idea of a shuttle service. Another major initiative to encourage residents and visitors to circulate is the completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system along the Niagara River Gorge, which has already been planned, and completed in many places. Key connecting segments and enhancements, such as ensuring that key stops along the trail have bike racks, remain to be added. The heritage area could even consider creating a bike rack design for the heritage area featuring the heritage area logo.

Encouraging appropriate biking and hiking support services, such as bike rental – especially a service that allows for one-way bike travel between communities in the heritage area – would add considerably to the visitor experience, not only within the Niagara Gorge Trail System but throughout the heritage area's communities. To encourage multi-modal travel, the heritage area could work on a program to encourage bike rental businesses to allow and encourage bike rentals in one location with the ability to drop off bicycles in another location. Bicycle rental businesses could be incorporated into a bicycle business, another complementary business, or offered as an automated bicycle rental such as Bcycle (see www.bcycle.com).

ACTION: Encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system and amenities along the Niagara River Gorge.

ACTION: Encourage the availability of bike rental services.

ACTION: Work with facilities and services throughout the area to help make them hiker and biker ready.

Beyond bicycling, there are many other transport possibilities to consider. Ideally, collaboration among businesses and others offering transportation within the heritage area will lead to seamless transitions between walking, bicycling, driving, and riding the shuttle service. Offering a multi-modal transportation experience could come to be an expected part of the fun of visiting the National Heritage Area. This expectation would be reinforced with a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Interpretive Center serving as a multi-modal transportation hub to connect to walking trails, bike rentals, car rentals, and shuttle service. (Described in more detail in Chapter 2, Niagara's Interpretive Presentation, it is anticipated that the Niagara USA Official Visitor Center or another location might serve as an Interpretive Center initially; once the Niagara Experience Center is completed, the Interpretive Center could be incorporated into that facility.) From such a hub and/or with the help of the cultural concierges mentioned above, travelers could customize opportunities to use bikes, hiking trails and shuttle services to meet personal interests and time frames.

Other kinds of transportation modes might be also pursued, such as bike taxis, carriage rides, or short term car rentals, which could be made available in downtown Niagara Falls as well as in Lewiston and at Old Fort Niagara/Youngstown. The easy availability of rental cars is particularly important. Rental cars might be made available through agency representatives working out of the Interpretive Center, or a creative rental system such as the 'flexcar' systems operating in cities such as Philadelphia, Washington, and Seattle might be used. The idea of creating interpretive exhibits for regional transportation terminals, such as the train station and airports would reinforce travelers' knowledge that they are in or near the National Heritage Area and have broad opportunities for travel connections within it.

Economic development partners could provide incentives to encourage the development of alternative transportation businesses, such as business development assistance to interested business owners or ongoing incentives to sustain existing businesses. Studies conducted by the heritage area, such as a feasibility study, a business plan, or a visitor needs survey, might stimulate interest by identifying new business opportunities with the

greatest potential. It might also be helpful to study whether there are barriers that inhibit the development of tourism-friendly transportation businesses and seek to eliminate them.

This kind of business development and an emphasis on active movement around the heritage area complements the recommendation in *A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York* for greater active recreational experiences in the Gorge. The study suggests creating "a concession arrangement to create a new/enhanced Niagara Falls State Park attractions… (such as)…zip line tours, rappelling into the Gorge, rock climbing, enhanced opportunities for hiking, trailhead improvement, etc." (p. 45). These kinds of active program opportunities were recommended as strategies to help increase the length of stay, encourage return visits, better utilize existing park assets, and engage young people.

A Strategy for Prosperity in Western New York identifies another strategic objective relating to transportation: in order to pursue the strategy of "transform[ing] Niagara Falls from a visitor attraction to an international tourism destination" (p. 44), it urges expanding the international routes serving Niagara Falls International Airport as one key component for this strategy. As a part of its emphasis on a multi-modal strategy and experience, the heritage area should monitor airport services to insure adequate connections from all airports serving the National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Encourage the development of businesses offering alternative transportation modes.

ACTION: Develop a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Interpretive Center as a multi-modal transportation hub.

3.8 Visitor Orientation

Visitor orientation is both a visitor experience and an interpretive presentation consideration. Factors in selecting orientation center locations include identifying places that:

- Are staffed and open seven days a week;
- Are conveniently located and easy to find;
- Have parking available; and
- Have staff with an interest in Niagara County's tourism industry who are able to provide visitor hospitality.

Orientation centers would offer a brochure rack with information about participating attractions, services, and events that are part of the National Heritage Area; an orientation exhibit about the National Heritage Area; and staff and volunteers who are knowledgeable about what the National Heritage Area has to offer. These orientation centers could be a part of existing visitor centers, or if a suitable visitor center is not available, the center could also be located in an existing attraction or a local business. Over time, it should be possible to enhance the visitor services and interpretation at the Lewiston and Youngstown National Heritage Area orientation centers, both on-site and off. Businesses might offer transportation and other services that support the National Heritage Area such as restaurants, retail, bike taxis, carriage rides, short term car rentals, cafes, unique retail,

art galleries, etc. Enhancements should position shuttle stops as satellite hubs for multi-modal transportation for each location.

ACTION: Establish orientation centers for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area at existing sites in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown.

ACTION: Encourage the development of tourism-friendly businesses near orientation centers and key attractions.

3.9 Tourism Marketing Partnerships

While tourism product development and other improvements to the National Heritage Area's visitor experience will be a primary focus of the Commission and many heritage area partners, corresponding activities to support the marketing efforts of partners to attract heritage travelers will also be important. As enhancements to the visitor experience are completed, the Commission will increase its emphasis on marketing activities and encourage partners to do likewise. Due the large number of tourism entities in the region, it is anticipated that almost all marketing activities undertaken by the heritage area will be done in partnership with one or more existing tourism organizations.

Thinking about Multi-Lingual Needs in the National Heritage Area

To address any need for multi-lingual materials identified through heritage area activities, the Commission will collaborate with the NTCC to align policies regarding multilingual materials. Currently very few attractions other than the Maid of the Mist offer multilingual materials. While the NTCC had an overview brochure available in a multi-lingual format in the past, it currently does not provide multi-lingual materials due to the high cost of customizing printed pieces and the wide range of languages spoken by Niagara Falls visitors. Generally speaking, the NTCC has found that most international visitors are comfortable with materials provided in English. For those visitors requiring foreign language services, guided tours led by a multi-lingual guide provide a higher quality experience for the visitor and a revenue source for the destination.

The NTCC has investigated the possibility of using automatic translation programs as a cost effective alternative to make online tourism information readily available in multiple languages. While current auto translation programs are not perfect, with rapidly evolving technology the NTCC anticipates that better software will be available in the near future. The Commission should continue to work with the NTCC and monitor the multi-lingual needs of visitors to the National Heritage Area to ensure that their needs are being met.

Niagara Falls is already recognized as an international tourism draw. As such, regional and state tourism entities in New York and tourism entities across the border in Canada are already promoting tourism products and itineraries that include attractions within the National Heritage Area. The National Heritage Area will create greater coordination among its attractions and organizations, and there will also be opportunities to build stronger partnerships with regional tourism entities in New York and Canada.

Communication is the first step in building marketing partnerships. The Commission will build relationships with regional tourism entities and share information about marketing goals and planned marketing activities. Where appropriate, the Commission will look for opportunities to coordinate marketing activities through cross promotion, co-op advertising, joint participation in trade shows, collaborative public relations outreach, and other promotional efforts, and will encourage heritage area partners to do likewise.

3.9.1 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC)

A critical marketing partner is the NTCC. Some markets currently targeted by the NTCC are likely to include heritage travelers with an interest in a Niagara Falls Nation Heritage Area visitor experience. As it undertakes marketing, the NTCC can adapt marketing messages to appeal to the heritage tourism sector within those target audiences. Short of more targeted marketing, however, incorporating visibility for the National Heritage Area into the Niagara USA website and other marketing efforts will result in marketing the National Heritage Area across the board to all of the NTCC's target markets.

Recognizing that target markets are dynamic and always changing to adapt to trends, opportunities and other external and internal factors, it is anticipated that the NTCC's target markets will change over time. The heritage area will work closely with the NTCC to understand the changing dynamics of the tourism market in the Niagara Falls region and adjust target market strategies as needed.

Of the NTCC's current existing audiences, the ones with the greatest potential for crossover interest in the National Heritage Area include a) empty nesters within a seven-hour drive, b) individual leisure travelers with a seven-hour drive, c) biking and hiking travelers, d) birding travelers, e) domestic motorcoach operators, f) African American church and social groups (especially for Underground Railroad experiences, g) student groups and g) reunions (especially military reunions) and h) Germany and the UK. As the NTCC modifies the list of target markets over time, the list of its audiences most likely also to be interested in the National Heritage Area experience may also change.

The heritage area can encourage the NTCC to add "heritage travelers" as an additional target market in its marketing plan by assisting the NTCC in developing and implementing public relations strategies targeting the heritage traveler, including press kits, digital photo libraries, media contacts, press releases, and building media relationships. The heritage area could also develop a small grant program to attractions and services to promote their business and the area outside of the region.

To help the heritage area reach out to these target audiences, the NTCC expects to incorporate information about the National Heritage Area into print and online materials used with these target markets. Through trade show displays, social media, online marketing and other marketing activities, the NTCC will have many other opportunities to expand awareness of the National Heritage Area with target audiences, building on the credibility and prestige of this designation. Many of the recommended products outlined the actions in this chapter such as walking and driving tours, maps, smart phone apps, and the seasonal guide can be used by the NTCC as part of its marketing efforts.

ACTION: Work with the NTCC to adapt its marketing messages to appeal to the heritage tourism sector within its target audiences.

ACTION: Encourage the NTCC to add "heritage travelers" as an additional target market in its marketing plan.

3.9.2 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Beyond Niagara County

Given the proximity of Buffalo and the strong focus of the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Buffalo Niagara) on the cultural traveler, it makes sense for the heritage area to encourage joint heritage tourism marketing ventures between NTCC and Visit Buffalo Niagara that target cultural and heritage travelers and position Niagara Falls as a destination for longer visits. For example, if the regional heritage pass discussed above includes attractions in both Niagara and Erie counties, the NTCC, Visit Buffalo Niagara, and the Commission could jointly develop and market this pass to cultural and heritage travelers.

It also makes sense to cultivate broader regional and international marketing partnerships with western New York and Canada. There are partnership opportunities with the five-county regional tourism coalition in New York State (Greater Niagara USA) and the New

York State Division of Tourism. Potential Canadian marketing partners include Tourism Niagara, the Binational Niagara Tourism Alliance, the Niagara 1812 Bicentennial Legacy Council, and the Niagara Parks Commission. In addition, the creation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area offers opportunities for enhanced marketing partnerships with other regional entities such as the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Area, the Great Lakes Seaway Trail National Scenic Byway, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

ACTION: Encourage joint heritage tourism marketing ventures between the NTCC and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau to target cultural and heritage travelers and position Niagara Falls as a destination for longer visits.

ACTION: Cultivate regional marketing partnerships with Canada.

ACTION: Cultivate regional marketing partnerships with western New York.

3.9.3 Tourism Marketing Partnerships: Local Businesses

The Commission, as evidenced by the discussion above concerning developing a quality standards program and promoting businesses that meet those standards, is committed to encouraging more business opportunities related to tourism in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Encouraging creative marketing partnerships to bring together diverse partners is part of this. The regional pass program discussed above is one example. As another example, the Commission could work with local restaurants to encourage them to serve dishes featuring fruit from local farms such as Murphy's Orchard. This would provide a cross-marketing opportunity for the restaurants to tell visitors about the Underground Railroad story of Murphy's Orchard, and conversely for Murphy's Orchard to tell its visitors about the restaurants where its orchard products are on the menu. Potential marketing partners within the heritage area could range from individual attractions or visitor service businesses to regional entities such as the Lower Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce.

Partnerships with tour operators to promote longer group tour experiences in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area for targeted audiences is a particular need in creating tourism marketing partnerships. The Commission will work collaboratively with tour operators to identify target audiences and evaluate participant feedback to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current tourism product, including identifying gaps in the current visitor experience that make it more difficult for tour operators to successfully offer longer tours in the heritage area. The heritage area can then work with tour operators to develop strategies to address those gaps.

ACTION: Encourage creative marketing partnerships to bring together diverse partners within the heritage area.

ACTION: Develop partnerships with tour operators to promote longer group tour experiences in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area for targeted audiences.

3.10 Evaluation

As described further in Chapter 7, Management and Implementation, and as with all activities in this plan, it is critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Heritage

Area's efforts. For one, under the federal legislation establishing this National Heritage Area, the NPS national program for heritage areas must evaluate it no later than 2020, and the Commission's own evaluation activities can support this requirement efficiently; for another, ongoing evaluation activities can help to provide critical feedback for effective use of public funds and the energies of the Commission, its staff, and its partners. While evaluation requires a dedicated commitment of time and other resources, it can be one of the most effective tools to help the heritage area earn the respect and the support of funding and program partners.

Suggested performance indicators have been included with each of the actions listed in this chapter in a table provided in Chapter 7. These provide guidance in identifying ways to track the results of ongoing efforts to enhance the visitor experience. It is critical for the heritage area to gather baseline data to document existing conditions. Without this initial baseline, it will be much more difficult to measure change over time accurately. Evaluation can be both expensive and time consuming. The Commission and its heritage area partners must consider the suggested indicators outlined in Chapter 7's table and identify those most feasible and useful to demonstrate the effectiveness of the heritage area's work. The Commission will collaborate with the NTCC first to identify performance indicators that are already being tracked and which are relevant to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area; and will collect baseline information and work with the NTCC on data collection and tracking change over time. The Commission will also respond to opportunities to collaborate with the NTCC and others on tourism research studies, adding targeted questions or Commissioning analysis of existing data specific to the National Heritage Area.

As with all regional efforts, a key challenge to measuring impact is the fact that there are multiple variables affecting change in the region. In order for the heritage area to be able to track change over time, collecting baseline data for key measurement indicators is critical, and this task should be undertaken immediately, before substantial heritage area work is completed.
Potential overall visitor experience and tourism indicators might include:

- Visitor awareness of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area;
- Average length of stay for Niagara County visitors
- Annual attendance at Niagara Falls NHA Partner and Signature attractions, events, and visitor services (perhaps in comparison to changes to baseline attendance figures for non-heritage-area attractions, events, and visitor services)
- Value and/or circulation numbers for public relations efforts to garner media coverage;
- Attendance at regional events and festivals within the National Heritage Area;
- Visitor satisfaction level at attractions or events within the National Heritage Area;
- Lodging occupancy rates; and
- Number of travelers in the shoulder/off season.

Certain indicators that could be used to evaluate progress on specific actions in this chapter may also be useful in providing an overall snapshot of visitor experience and tourism in the National Heritage Area, including (all indicators listed below are also found in Table 7-XX of Chapter 7):

- Number of attractions, events, and visitor services participating at the Partner and Signature levels for the National Heritage Area;
- Number of sites proactively working toward Signature designation;
- Participation in the Ambassador Program and Certified Guide program at different levels including years of service;
- New tourism products created with assistance from the National Heritage Area, along with a measurement of the success of each new product;
- Ridership on the proposed shuttle service for the National Heritage Area;
- Sales of the proposed regional pass;
- Unique visitors to the heritage area website
- Addition of new attractions, events or visitor services within the National Heritage Area; and
- Overall number of new tourism related businesses and jobs created.

ACTION: Collaborate with the NTCC to identify measurement indicators that are already being tracked that are relevant to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Collect baseline information and work with the NTCC on data collection and tracking change over time.

ACTION: Identify performance indicators to track the effectiveness of the National Heritage Area, ensuring that baseline data is collected for all measurement indicators that will be tracked over time.

Costumed interpreters at Old Fort Niagara

Chapter 4 – Community Engagement

This chapter reviews ways for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission and heritage area partners to engage communities and residents and cultivate lasting public understanding and support in pursuit of the heritage area's mission, goals, and vision.

Interpretation and efforts to cultivate tourism for the entirety of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, as described in the preceding two chapters, are what is "new" about a heritage area as a community planning and development exercise. Both interpretive and tourism planners for heritage area strategies and programs consider many possible audiences – drawn from both the visiting public and the residents of the heritage area and surrounding regions.

This chapter addresses some of the same activities identified in other chapters, focusing on residents. It offers still more ideas with residents in mind as the primary audience, particularly with regard to educational approaches and programming for youth.

Engaging individuals and leaders, neighborhoods and communities, and organizations and institutions of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is critical. The Commission must offer ways for residents to build their appreciation for the heritage area's resources, stories, and opportunities. That appreciation is critical in building support for community investment in preservation, interpretation, and development to support long term improvements. Moreover, residents themselves possess stories, affect the sense of hospitality that visitors experience, and can volunteer for the many activities that will need personal investments of time. Deep community engagement, therefore, can enrich the heritage area in many important ways.

4.1 Planning Guidance for Community Engagement

The *Environmental Assessment* for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area outlines the initial planning process that guides this management plan. Chapter 1 of the Environmental Assessment, Purpose and Need, includes the vision, mission, and goals developed for the heritage area – a combination sometimes called the "foundation for planning." The following sections provide selections pertinent to this chapter.

4.1.1 Guidance from the Vision and Mission Statements

In part, the heritage area's vision states that it will enable "growth of a sustainable regional economy and the conservation of its natural and cultural resources in **ways that benefit and unite its people and places**. Its natural splendor and meaningful heritage are shared with millions of delighted visitors and **celebrated by its residents** so that its **environment and communities are thriving**" (emphasis added).

The mission statement for the National Heritage Area also provides guidance for this chapter, calling for:

Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative: Engaging our Young People

- *Work with partners on interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that use local history and historic sites to meet state curriculum requirements.*
- *Create a Junior Rangers Program encouraging children to visit and engage with sites.*
- *Provide internships for local college students.*
- *Enable youth organizations to use the region's history and resources for their objectives.*
- *Encourage local youth leadership organizations.*
- *Provide an expansive local history program for local school children that instills a sense of appreciation and pride for the community and environment in which they live;*
- *Create an Ambassadors Program to engage local young people in presenting their communities to visitors.*
- *Create seasonal employment opportunities for young adults to work with interpretive programs and businesses.*
- *Maintain an awareness of regional scholastic, research and conservation projects to identify ways for students to address heritage area goals.*
- *Partner with local trades organizations to teach young adults the skills necessary to create a restoration economy in the region.*
- *Participate with the Student Conservation Association in establishing a program for environmental and outdoor recreation enhancements.*

- The enhancement of public appreciation for the heritage area's communities, resources, and landscapes;
- Working through a network of partners to make improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike; and
- Valuing such principles as "authenticity, cultural diversity, high-quality design, energy efficiency, regional and cross-border leadership, open communication, and transparent operations."

4.1.2 Guidance from Goals and the Preferred Alternative

Early in the planning process, the Commission identified nine goals for the heritage area. Alternative approaches through which the Commission and partners could achieve those goals were then explored, and a Preferred Alternative was selected (see sidebars). These goals help to structure this chapter:

- **Engaging our Young People** – Provide interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that motivate them to develop knowledge and understanding of the community's important stories; learn useful skills and trades; and become the region's next generation of leaders.
- **Interpretation and Education** – Assure the creation of a high quality educational and interpretive program, providing partners with a framework and opportunities to inform and inspire a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the diverse communities, cultures, resources and environments in the Niagara region.
- **Outdoor Recreation** – Identify and support outdoor activities and programs; eco-tourism opportunities; and recreational access and facilities that enhance heritage area resources and amenities.

4.2 Concept and Approach for Community Engagement

The driving concept for this chapter is this: The involvement and appreciation of individuals and leaders, neighborhoods and communities, and organizations and institutions is critical to this heritage area's success over the long term.

Fortunately, just about everything the heritage area might accomplish has a community engagement dimension. This chapter is designed to bring that dimension out, to encourage all with a stake in the success of the heritage area to take advantage of as many opportunities to build community engagement as possible. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will seek to stimulate the creation of a rich and diverse program of community engagement through five strategies:

(1) Creating **visible programs and a public presence** so that residents come to view the heritage area as a regular element of community life.

(2) Encouraging well-designed, coordinated **educational programs for residents, students, and visitors**. While much of this overlaps with the interpretive programs described in Chapter 2, there are elements that may especially appeal to local audiences, including **community-based arts and cultural programs** and **outdoor recreation** – with activities in both of these including **community events**, from public lectures to festivals.

(3) Encouraging **community research and recording of oral histories**, to build community knowledge and pride and record the detailed oral traditions that provide texture and life to community history. This activity should be supported by a well-provided-for central resource for archiving and accessing documentary and material collections, oral history, and research.

(4) Creating **a rich array of ways to reach and serve the youth of this region**, encouraging them to gain knowledge and direct experience of heritage development and tourism in much the same way that youth education curricula now include environmental education. In terms of investing in the civic future of the heritage area for long term dividends, this particular element may be one of the best ways to spend the heritage area's resources – and there are many possibilities for such programming. This goes well beyond any ambition for youth education about the region's history and environment, although these provide a foundation for such programming. Engaging young people in leadership development and creating a deep understanding of community functions, needs, and priorities is a good investment in lasting leadership for heritage area and its communities.

(5) To aid partners in coordinating and expanding their programs in all of these ways, the Commission expects to **become a central, "first response" provider of technical assistance, clearinghouse information, and other kinds of support for public and school-based education**. Both visitors and residents will benefit from such activities, but the focus will be on residents.

Chapter 7, Management and Implementation, offers guidance in general for partnering, and for a communications plan where much of the work described in this chapter can be blended (section 7.5). A key objective for this plan is to identify as many opportunities as possible for the Commission and heritage area partners to encourage community engagement, particularly in creating a public presence for the heritage area. No program should go without this analysis.

In general, many of the ideas in this chapter "piggy-back" on ideas outlined in other chapters, with the exception of education and youth outreach.

ACTION: Incorporate five community engagement objectives into an overall communications plan: (1) a public presence for residents; (2) community education and outreach through arts and cultural programs and outdoor recreation; (3) community participation in research; (4) youth involvement and leadership development; and (5) outreach to schools.

Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative: Interpretation and Education

- *Collaborate with partners in developing an interpretive framework and plan and in networking attractions, to reach a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the region's communities, cultures, resources, and environments.*
- *Support partners in implementing their sites' portions of the interpretive plan, beginning with a core program, with other experiences phased in over time.*
- *Assist local partners in establishing and supporting a central database of materials, publications and artifacts related to interpretive subjects and encourage scholarly research.*

Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative: Outdoor Recreation

- *Provide technical assistance, grants, and organizational capabilities to relate recreational programming directly to the heritage area's interpretive themes.*
- *Promote a rich array of outdoor recreation opportunities that facilitate interaction with and learning in the natural world, including such activities as boating, fishing, birding, camping, and guided educational hiking tours.*

4.3 Communication: Creating a Public Presence

Heritage area identity and branding has already been addressed by preceding chapters on interpretation and heritage tourism (Chapters 2 and 3). Adopting a standard graphic identity will reinforce this public presence over time; as this is used and becomes familiar in everything from the digital world to paper publications to wayfinding signage, residents will come to associate this visual and physical presence with the heritage area as a whole.

Identity, however, is only a part of branding – the sauce, so to speak. When it comes to serving the local public, the main dish is creating visible programs with a level of quality that attracts repeat audiences among residents. It should mean something special to a resident when he or she learns that the Commission is a sponsor or producer of an event or program, or that a given attraction or organization is a "partner" in the heritage area.

High-quality programming that creates a long-term, recognizable "brand" for heritage-area offerings is described in Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*. The next section specifically addresses opportunities in adult education, while sections beyond that address specific topics that may prove helpful in identifying effective programs to pursue.

Marketing to the "home audience" of residents is an important part of creating visible programs. Large and enthusiastic audiences help to spread the word that activities related to the heritage area are worth attending and supporting. Even the most innovative and well-conceived programs are not worth doing if the intended audience fails to materialize. This includes everything from aiding partners in doing the best job possible to reach its audiences for given programs or activities, to promoting the heritage area's website to make sure that the public understands how to access and use it.

Actions for improving the heritage area's website for interpretation in general are offered in Chapter 2. In addition, the website is a convenient means of supporting partners' marketing to residential audiences by linking to partners' sites and featuring upcoming events and programs. Therefore, that website should be specifically marketed to residents; while marketing dollars are limited (as discussed in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*), those available should be apportioned to apprising residents of its availability and ease of use, in order to support partners' marketing.

ACTION: Support partners in creating high-quality local history presentations and events designed specifically for residents.

ACTION: Address partners' needs for marketing support to reach local audiences for their programs.

ACTION: Use the heritage area's website to promote partners' websites and feature partners' upcoming events and programs.

ACTION: Market the heritage area's website to residents in order to support partners' marketing.

4.4 Educational Programming for Residents

Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*, addresses collaboration with partners to develop an interpretive framework and plan and to network attractions, to reach a wide range of audiences and nurture public appreciation for the region's communities, cultures, resources, and environments. Core audiences for interpretive programming include residents. The guiding principles for interpretation expressed in Chapter 2 are equally important to the concept of education.

The challenge in creating interpretive and educational programs for residential audiences is keeping these programs fresh and appealing to repeat participants. Too often, residents do not engage with interpretive attractions until friends and family come to visit, assuming that what is offered by attractions does not change enough to spark continuing interest. Successful interpretive sites work hard to understand the needs and interests of their local audiences and respond with appropriate seasonal and experiential variations on their themes, exhibits, and programmed activities.

The range of possibilities is too wide to describe in detail in this plan, and investigation of audience interest is rather more a marketing challenge than a needs assessment. Still, an investigation of local interest and priorities could be part of a more general approach to understanding local needs. To understand appropriate possibilities that the heritage area should encourage, a first step would be to assemble a working group through the Interpretive Committee comprising leaders of local organizations experienced in adult heritage education to investigate what has worked in the region and to study effective programs elsewhere. The American Association for State and Local History is a good resource, with an Interpreters & Educators Affinity Group for ongoing dialogue and activities to share good practices (http://www.aaslh.org/educators&Interpreters.htm). Results from the working group should be:

- One or two good projects or practices chosen for emphasis in the first year following the group's work – through training, program development, or grant support;

- A description of the range of needs to be addressed over time; and

- A series of steps or strategies in the form of a brief, short-range strategic plan – as little as on one or two pages – to help shape the first one or two years of an adult education initiative led by heritage area partners.

The remainder of this section suggests three programming areas for focus that have adult-education dimensions and which local audiences are likely to appreciate: community-based arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events. Each of these topics should be the basis for an element of the short-range strategic plan.

ACTION: Work with heritage area attractions on effective, collaborative research into the needs and interests of local audiences and ways to employ interactive programming.

ACTION: Establish a working group or subcommittee of the Interpretive Committee to focus on adult education programming and create a short-range strategic plan that includes (but is not limited to) a focus on arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events.

ACTION: Support innovative educational programs focusing on audiences of adult residents. Consider Road Scholar (formerly Elder Hostel) and offering continuing education classes related to the history and culture of the region, working with local colleges and universities and the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center.

4.4.1 Arts and Cultural Programs

Arts and cultural programs are not only interesting to local audiences in their own right, but they have an important community economic development dimension. Partners for heritage area efforts to address arts and cultural programming in order to stimulate community engagement would include the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center in Niagara Falls, the Lewiston Council on the Arts, the Arts Council in Buffalo & Erie County, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a major potential funder. The Western New York Artists Network™ can point the way to individual artists and businesses.

A January 2005 report of the Buffalo Niagara Cultural Tourism Initiative entitled, *A Cultural Tourism Strategy: Enriching Culture and Building Tourism in Buffalo Niagara*, emphasizes the importance of focus on the arts and culture (without even mentioning, in that part of the report – the remarkable dollars that are associated with cultural heritage tourism involving the arts):

> Cultural, arts, and heritage assets also play an indirect but critically valuable role in the broader economic development strategy of the region. For instance, convention decisions often hinge upon the quality of life and cultural tourism amenities offered by a region. Moreover, people making location-based investments – where to establish or expand a business, relocate for employment, raise a family, vacation or retire – favorably regard regions offering opportunities for cultural enrichment. The arts and culture community in Buffalo Niagara should be recognized as part of the region's basic infrastructure for sustainable economic development and should be invested in accordingly. Clearly the reasons to develop cultural tourism go beyond the ticket and retail sales at cultural venues, hotels, restaurants and elsewhere. The region's extraordinary galleries, museums, theaters and historic sites remain important in and of themselves. They enliven community character, contribute to regional quality of life and signal that the community values excellence and intelligent discourse. It is crucial that we pursue strategies that can expand the opportunities for artistic expressions, historic understanding and reflective experience.

While the above quote focuses on the benefit of the arts to tourism, it acknowledges local benefits of "opportunities for artistic expressions, historic understanding and reflective experience." The heritage area would do well to take this as a mantra in its focus on the arts and cultural programming for local audiences.

Involvement in the arts can sometimes take the form of figuring out how to express ideas for interpretation through the arts. The *Freedom's Crossing* sculpture on the waterfront in Lewiston is an excellent example of such an approach, and this approach is recommended for several interpretive themes in Chapter 2. It can work particularly well when there are not actual sites remaining to help tell particular stories. The Underground Railroad, for example, which is the subject of *Freedom's Crossing*, everywhere (not simply in this heritage area) is woefully short of structures and even documentary and visual records (photographs, drawings) that can make other historical subjects readily accessible to audiences. The Castellani Art Museum's standing exhibit on the local Underground Railroad, also called Freedom's Crossing, is another example of collaboration with the arts to achieve excellent interpretation.

The performing arts also present an opportunity for interpretation. Niagara University's theatre arts program, for example, could provide "players" for productions and street theater to bring particular stories to life.

The involvement of the arts community in the heritage area is a high priority for the Commission. Hosts at arts venues such as galleries and artists' studios should be educated about the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and invited to engage with the Commission and heritage area partners on how to involve the arts, local artists, and the arts-related business community in tours, community events, and other activities related to heritage interpretation. As the arts community seeks to reach audiences, its many participants can spread the word about the heritage area to residents and visitors alike.

ACTION: Involve the arts community in bringing engaging and relevant interpretation to a wide audience.

ACTION: Involve the arts community in engaging residents in heritage area programs and events.

ACTION: Include representatives of the arts community in strategic planning to support community engagement in the heritage area through educational programming.

4.4.2 Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation provides access to the region's many wonderful natural resources, many of which are interpreted now and will be interpreted further according to planning in Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*. It contributes to quality of life by linking communities to the river and the natural world – and through trails especially, by linking communities to one another.

Outdoor recreation in its own right is valuable for its own sake – simply enjoying the outdoors, fresh air, and exercise is not something to be taken for granted, not in an age when much of the American population now experiences an alternative digital life, indoors and onscreen. In fact, environmental educators have a term born from their concern especially about children's access to the outdoors (coined from the federal educational initiative of a similar name for school achievement): No Child Left Indoors. The heritage area can support redoubled efforts to insure that children – indeed, all residents – have ample opportunity and guidance in accessing the outdoors.

A major asset in stimulating more use of the outdoors in this region is, of course, the Niagara River Gorge. Beautiful, mysterious, enormous, filled with the awe-inspiring, swirling waters of the Great Lakes forcing its way through the ancient defile – itself a wondrous exposure of a unique geological phenomenon, the Niagara Escarpment – the Gorge and the natural area along its edge are powerful attractions for a wide variety of recreational activities.

Recognizing this, the Niagara Falls State Park, the New York Power Authority, the Niagara River Greenway, local jurisdictions, and many others have been working in recent years for much-improved access to the Gorge. The region soon will experience many longer and better trail linkages and trailheads thanks to much behind-the-scenes planning, permitting, and design. For example, access from the Niagara Falls Customhouse via a stairway soon to be under construction will create a short-range loop for visitors to Niagara Falls State Park. While major challenges remain in completing a long-dreamed-of "Falls to the Fort" off-road trail, the Commission is committed to supporting these many other partners in working to make this dream a reality.

Ensuring community access to natural resources beyond the Gorge in similar ways is also desirable. The Gill Creek Park Educational Nature Trail project in Niagara Falls, sponsored by the Niagara Street Business and Professional Association, is an excellent example of the kind of project that can link communities to the river and their immediate environment through access and environmental interpretation. It will add nearly a mile of trail to an existing 450-foot trail in the seven-acre park, whose improvement has been a long-standing project adopted by the association, and link it to a larger park nearby, Hyde Park. "The introduction of young children to nature through the informed interaction that a nature trail provides ensures that tomorrow's generation will have a greater appreciation for our environment and an understanding of sound conservation practices," reads the document submitted February 1, 2011, to the Host Communities Standing Committee for a ruling on the project's consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan. It was awarded a grant by the Greenway Commission in the amount of $102,280.

Sometimes greater access to the outdoors is a matter of providing better information and guidance to access locations. Since this is an element of improving the visitor's experience as well as the resident's, this is something to be emphasized early in implementation of this plan. The Commission can engage and inform the public through maps and brochures, its website, applications for smart phones and other digital media, and the wayfinding approaches described in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*.

While creating greater access to simple outdoor recreation is a worthy objective, many others are involved in this activity. The heritage area must seek to make a difference, to fill a niche within this "ecosystem" of providers. In addition to working with others to insure wider access and better information about that access as it exists and grows, the Commission's objectives in outdoor recreation are two-fold: to engage residents, and to stimulate greater appreciation for natural resources through interpretation and education.

The Commission will also keep an eye on the long-range impact of these programs in developing the community's support and leadership for conservation of the natural world.

Messages conveyed through outdoor learning programs supported by the heritage area should include promoting awareness and understanding of the effects of preserving the natural world and a clean environment on the long-term economic, social, and physical health of the heritage area and its communities. The Commission and the region have a special opportunity in the Native American traditions and stories related to this special place, where the human relationship to the land and natural resources of the area is cultivated to support a sense of being at one with nature.

As with all other topics here, there is a wide variety of ways to achieve the objectives discussed here. Engaging with partners to assess immediate needs and actions is a critical first step. Environmental and outdoor educators, especially among park professionals who work to engage adult audiences along with children, should be involved in assessment and planning for ways that the heritage area can emphasize outdoor learning opportunities for residents.

ACTION: Support the development of recreational access that affords wide access to the natural resources of the heritage area.

ACTION: [repeated from Chapter 3] Create a detailed map and guide to trails along the Niagara River.

ACTION: [repeated from Chapter 3] Encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system along the Niagara River Gorge.

ACTION: Include representatives of the environmental education community in strategic planning to support community engagement in the heritage area through outdoor access and learning opportunities.

ACTION: Collaborate on the development of environmental education programs that provide deep experiences of the natural world, for residents, visitors, and students. Encourage participation of the tribal nations in providing access to and interpretation of the natural world.

ACTION: Collaborate on the development of interpretive and educational programs that connect outdoor experiences to an understanding of the effects of preserving the natural world and a clean environment on the long-term economic, social, and physical health of the heritage area and its communities.

4.4.3 Community Events

Events are a large part of community engagement and a community's quality of life, as they offer opportunities for residents to enjoy working with one another on the events and then sharing the fun – in the process building relationships and community capacity to tackle a host of community needs, heritage-related or otherwise. They are also a major means for interpretive attractions and communities to share their stories in fresh and enticing ways. As also mentioned above, events offer activities to the heritage area's residential audience that go beyond the basic offerings enjoyed by the one-time visitor.

What are events? They can be anything from a full-blown street festival complete with street performers, craft and food sales, musical and other acts, to one or more "guest lectures" targeting a smaller audience interested in particular historical topics. Many communities and attractions build an annual calendar around one or more "signature" events, that audiences far and wide come to associate with the sponsoring place and anticipate from year to year.

Events are not easy. Smaller communities may be able to mount only one such event a year, bewaring volunteer burnout if they attempt more. It might be said that such places follow the "less is more" principle of not attempting more than community capacity can permit. Larger communities can share the load among more people, but even in larger communities, recruiting volunteers on an annual basis can be a challenge. For some events, the workload year after year falls on the same shoulders – without succession planning for long-term leadership, the workload may ultimately fall by the wayside.

Yet, more is often, well, more. Old Fort Niagara builds entire seasons around special events and educational programs. USA Niagara does the same for its downtown cultural district beside the Niagara Falls State Park. Lewiston's business community has blossomed thanks not only to ArtPark's continuous performances – an advantage few communities enjoy – but also events sponsored by local organizations.

Historic Lewiston, for example, offers an annual tour of historic homes in early December and a commemoration of the Battle of Queenston in mid-October. It routinely schedules fun events for residents – such as a recent showing of the old Cary Grant movie *Arsenic and Old Lace* with a brief presentation beforehand about Lewiston's connection to the story that inspired the movie. (Communities as successful as Lewiston in attracting visitors, however, must also take care that event-based tourism does not overwhelm their residents, a concept addressed in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*.)

The heritage area may become involved in, or initiate, region-wide events, encouraging widespread collaboration among partners. An example of one region-wide event is the bi-national Doors Open event, a once-annual event that returns in June of 2012 as a part of the commemoration of the War of 1812 – see http://www.doorsopenniagara.com/. This event draws together as many sites as possible to market their offerings collectively for a specific period of time, offering free or reduced admission to residents and creating special events. This may be a good early opportunity for the Commission to examine collaboration among organizers and participants at close hand and find ways to build longer term relationships with them. The Essex National Heritage Area in Massachusetts and the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Corridor have both helped to lead events similar to this region's Doors Open event.

As with other areas of focus here, there are many examples of successful events in the heritage area, and it is difficult to predict which, if any, the heritage area might support among its partners' offerings. Support for region-wide events and events showcasing the heritage area's interpretive themes are likely to receive priority, but the focus can be adjusted from year to year by the Commission. The strategic plan described in the introduction to section 4.4 is critical in helping to pinpoint how to assist events and temporary programs that are most likely to engage residents and support the heritage area.

In approaching any of the possibilities, the Commission may take the following actions:

ACTION: Support community- and site-based events with assistance in strengthening their connections to the authentic heritage of the region;

ACTION: Establish quality standards and recognition for participating events that meet those standards, for marketing to a visitor audience (described in Chapter 3); and

ACTION: Encourage more and innovative events, coordinating among communities where possible;

ACTION: Assist in marketing events, including encouraging visitors to enjoy events not specifically designed for visitors, who often appreciate the opportunity to experience the local flavor of "homegrown events" and meet residents;

ACTION: Create regional events that will engage residents and visitors – judiciously, and with the help of volunteers, to minimize impacts on the Commission's other duties; and

ACTION: Work with communities on mitigating any negative impacts of large events, observing one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's guiding principles for heritage tourism: "Find the Fit between the Community and Tourism: A good cultural heritage tourism effort makes the destination a better place to live as well as a better place to visit."

4.5 Community Involvement in Research

The heritage area can help to build support for a central repository for archiving and accessing documentary and material collections, oral history, and research. It can also celebrate and encourage audio and video recording of oral histories and develop an active program of training and events. As there is an element of historic preservation involved, this topic is further addressed in the next chapter, Chapter 5, *Preservation, Conservation & Stewardship*.

4.5.1 Creating a Repository for Research

Research and documentation are critical elements in achieving goals for widespread community engagement. Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*, section 2.2.2, addresses archival research and documentation in detail, because research is important in order to develop well-informed interpretation. It should also be geared, however, toward understanding the community and disseminating the information discovered to residents through products and programs they would most enjoy.

The Niagara Falls Public Library's Local History Department contains a trove of local history primary sources, and the Historical Association of Lewiston began in 2009 to preserve a large collection of papers collected for more than 150 years by the International Order of Odd Fellows. The collection included papers from other societies that closed their lodges, providing valuable genealogical clues as well as serving as primary historical sources.

New Program Allows Internet Access to History Collections

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) in partnership with American Heritage Publishing – producer of the venerable American Heritage magazine – have announced the debut of an on-line system that allows searches through dozens of historic collections, from small local museums to collections of the Smithsonian, National Parks, and U.S. Navy. In the making since 2007, the program went live in March of 2011.

The program is designed to give museums greater visibility and provide a low-cost way to move collection items to the Internet, including objects. Terry Davis, AASLH president, stated in announcing the debut, "The National Portal is a tremendous milestone in this effort to digitize these collections and make them available online."

The Mariners' Museum of Newport News, Virginia, reports, "We put as much of our collection online as we could and it paid off in increased loan fees, greater visibility (even internationally), and increased image licensing and purchasing." Every institution in the National Portal has an individualized main page that allows users to search the individual museum's collection. In addition, a national search page allows searches across multiple collections. History organizations add their collections at a nominal cost to the National Portal, which has grown rapidly since its debut.

The program is described at http://www.americanheritage.com/about/portal.

A needs assessment is a first step in determining how best to support the library and other archival repositories and collections. An assessment can provide the basis for a plan that can be phased in over time, and which can identify a means of creating a regular funding stream for its implementation.

The Niagara County Historical Society, the Town of Porter Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, and the proposed Niagara Experience Center are among other potential heritage area partners whose interests include insuring that research materials are well housed, catalogued and indexed, and accessible to researchers and the public as appropriate. It may be possible to expand accessibility through the internet; for example, collections of objects and images are now accessible through the National Portal to Historic Collections (see sidebar). An example of a statewide digital collection, Kentucky's, may be seen at http://www.kyhistory.com:2010/index.php.

A few communities across the United States have created local archive programs. Butte, Montana, is one such place, having created a public program in 1981 to assemble what is today an enormous collection of manuscripts, documents, and photographs that buttress much historical research there – including recent documentary films. Butte's mines provided the copper made into electrical wiring across the nation from the late 19th to the early 20th century. Like Niagara Falls – whose experience with electricity is also a driver of its equally rich industrial history – it grew as it attracted immigrants of many ethnicities, providing a fascinating mix of community heritage celebrated there through events as well as archival programs. In 2010, the community rehabbed the old fire station in which the archives were housed and built a state-of-the art addition, taking its program to an entirely new level.

ACTION: Inventory archival collections in the Niagara Falls region and perform a needs assessment, as the basis for a plan.

ACTION: [repeated from Chapter 2] Collaborate with the Niagara Falls Public Library in preparing and implementing a plan to support the library as a central archive and repository for historical information and collections on the Niagara Falls region.

4.5.2 Recording Community Traditions and Memories

Here is a key question to be answered by community research in the course of stimulating community engagement: The people who live in these communities and neighborhoods built them, or have memories of their builders – what are their stories?

The Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University is a key partner in answering this question. With support from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, it leads field research, programming, and presentations based on the region's folklife. As its website states, "Folk arts are creative practices rooted in tradition and a sense of group identity. Because folk arts are created by and for a particular group of people, they reflect the unique history, values, interests, and aesthetics of that group. Our work recognizes the artistic contributions of the region's many diverse peoples;

promotes a better appreciation and understanding of cultural differences; calls attention to the cultural resources that give our region its unique character; and helps preserve our region's cultural heritage for future generations" (http://www.castellaniartmuseum.org/about-folk-arts/, accessed 2-20-12).

In partnership with Western New York artists and community consultants, the Castellani's folk arts program produces exhibitions, publications, artist demonstrations, and performances that bring folk arts to a wider audience. Ongoing ethnographic research also forms the basis of a permanent archive of regional folk arts documentation.

Oral history also has received attention, although unlike the library with archives (which can include oral histories) and the museum with folk arts, there is no central force to assist in gaining greater attention to desirability of a rich oral history program. Each individual's memory is a library of family and local history.

Bill Bradberry, a Commissioner, chair of the Underground Railroad Heritage Area, and local writer, remarked in a Feb. 7, 2012, column for the *Niagara Gazette*:

> The more recent history of black and white immigrants alike is being lost, simply because so many from that generation are passing on without passing along their life experiences. Why are we not sitting down with our elders and writing down their stories, preserving their legacies? A new oral history project is desperately needed to capture those stories, lest they be lost forever. In cities like Niagara Falls, the stories of how our people lived together successfully in highly diverse neighborhoods should be recorded for future historical analysis. Let's not treat our history the same way we have treated so many of our historically important buildings and landmarks, demolishing them and replacing them with emptiness."[Bradberry has personally collected the oral histories of more than a hundred African American residents of Niagara Falls, but needs help to make them accessible to researchers and interpreters.]

Other local programs have also focused on specific groups. For example, the Tuscarora undertook oral histories in association with studies during the relicensing of the power generation project, and the Bureau of Jewish Education's Jewish Buffalo Archives Project hopes to work in the Niagara Falls area by 2013. The Uncrowned Community Builders Project of the nonprofit Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc., supported since 2006 by the University at Buffalo, has collected histories of African American residents and has an extensive digital archive. (http://www.buffalo.edu/community/documents/UCCB_Brochure.pdf).

Fortunately, with the internet and such programs as the StoryCorps program, individuals and organizations interested in oral history have more tools. StoryCorps encourages "Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of our lives." Since 2003, the program has collected and archived more than 40,000 interviews from more than 70,000 participants. Each conversation is preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. StoryCorps is one of the largest oral history projects of its kind, with millions listening to its broadcasts

on its website and on public radio. It will rent recording kits, and through its "Door-to-Door" program will bring portable recording equipment to one location to record up to six 40-minute interviews per day. According to its website, "Organizations across the country have used Door-to-Door sessions to celebrate anniversaries and milestones, add a personal voice to fundraising and marketing materials, and provide the meaningful StoryCorps experience to their community." (http://storycorps.org/)

The existence of programs like StoryCorps and the ready accessibility of adequate audio and video equipment makes it all the more likely that individuals and families will undertake such projects. But stewardship of the results can wax and wane; old tapes stay in shoeboxes, never to be seen again as they pass to the next generation, labels fading or crumbling, or they find a final resting place in hot attics, fading themselves. They generally lack transcripts, cataloguing, and indexing that would make them completely useful to researchers. Without proper permission, audio and video tapes cannot be shared with the public through such media as websites, radio shows, and exhibitions.

As with archives, a needs assessment and inventory is a first step, and can be undertaken as a special element of the work of assessing the region's archival needs and potential. Forming a repository for copies of oral histories related to the communities of the National Heritage Area can also be a special section of a plan for addressing these needs. In addition, researchers and ethnographers can assist the heritage area in assessing research needs – what ethnic groups, industries, or other topics are under-represented among the oral history collections discovered?

The heritage area can go beyond assessments and plans more immediately, however. Workshops can of course offer training in techniques for interviewing and recording. They can also offer the best practices and principles of organizations like the Oral History Association (http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/principles-and-practices/) and the American Folklife Center (http://www.loc.gov/folklife/ index.html). This can go a long way in addressing the long term loss of older oral histories, and develop volunteer interest in ferreting out forgotten collections. The volunteers who attend such workshops may also be interested in how archival collections can support their interest in local history, so a training workshop on archival methods may also be of use early in this process.

In addition, the heritage area could work with partners to sponsor "community memory days," asking individuals to visit an "expo" to allow scans and photos of family papers, photos, and objects for preservation in local archives. Experts could offer advice on preserving these items. Other activities for such an event could include displays by local historical associations and sites to recruit members and volunteers, advertise upcoming events, share recent research, or sell publications. Panels of elders could offer memories of the neighborhoods and downtowns and jobs they experienced as they were growing up and maturing can be popular ways of capturing oral histories in a different medium than the one-on-one interview. Workshops described above can also be a part of an event such as this.

The heritage area itself can act as a "portal" to point researchers to existing collections, serve up oral history recordings, or otherwise support the community's interest in building up its memories and engaging in local history.

ACTION: Inventory oral history collections in the Niagara Falls region and assess needs, as the basis for a plan for both preservation and spurring more interviews.
ACTION: Develop a web page pointing researchers to available archival and oral history collections.

ACTION: Participate in and support collection of oral histories.

ACTION: Support the identification and upgrading of existing oral histories with transcription/scanning, cataloging, indexing, and permissions.

ACTION: Create training programs and other events to encourage community involvement in researching, archiving, and recording local and oral history

ACTION: Share discoveries in local research with the general public through innovative outreach programs and technologies.

"The Most Diverse City outside New York"

Focused on "Tunnel Town," The Evolution of an Ethnic Neighborhood that Became United in Diversity in Niagara Falls, NY: The East Side, 1880 – 1930 is a local history book that illustrates the potential of using oral history along with traditional historical research in capturing the history of Niagara Falls. Actually a doctoral thesis self-published in 2000 as a 628-page book by the author, H. William Feder, Ph.D. (http://oureastside.com/), one reviewer describes it as "an exhaustively researched narrative into the lives of these early Falls residents." The book received an accolade from Bruce Jackson, Distinguished Professor of American Culture of the University at Buffalo: "William Feder's historical and folkloric discussion is so comprehensive and ranging in its detail and primary information that it is an important document in its own right. It is not only a compendium and analysis of a neighborhood and a town and the educational, political, and social systems they engendered and endured, it is an archive. Its strength is in his obvious knowledge of and love for the place, and the wide range of primary documents he has, with such obvious diligence, managed to find and organize: letters, official records, interviews, newspaper articles that are themselves not just sources of information but part of the story he is telling."

4.6 Programs for Youth

When Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commissioners sat down at the beginning of the planning process to envision the heritage area's future and set goals, their passion for reaching the heritage area's youth was palpable, as the quotes above illustrate. Moreover, in considering options for the limited funds available for early actions (projects undertaken before completion of the planning process), the Commission put its dollars where its members' hearts clearly lie, in a youth program modeled after the National Park Service's Junior Ranger program (described further below).

The Junior Ranger program also illustrates a principle the Commission has embraced, to go beyond the schoolhouse door in supporting programs to engage families and youth.

It is a simple (and obvious) ambition to educate the region's students about the region's history and environment. Such a foundation is important and is a part of the existing curriculum, and the Commission expects to support innovation and expansion in such standard school offerings. For example, it has also spent early-action funding to encourage local teachers to take advantage of a recent documentary film recent documentary that featured the heritage area's role in the War of 1812. The Commission provided an educator's curriculum and activity guide at no cost to teachers for the grades where New York State curriculum is applicable (4th, 7th, and 11th) as well as library media specialists.

The Commission's objectives also include a greater challenge, encouraging the region's youth to gain knowledge and direct experience of heritage development and tourism in much the same way that they are now offered lessons in local history and the local environment. Partnerships with the schools are critical to achieve this objective, but it may also take collaboration with civic leaders as well.

In terms of investing in the civic future of the heritage area for long term dividends, the approaches described here may be among best ways to spend the heritage area's resources. Engaging young people in leadership development and creating a deep understanding of community functions, needs, and priorities is a good investment in lasting leadership for the heritage area and its communities. The long-term future of the heritage area's leadership may depend on engaging students and educators, and enlisting the community in an enthusiastic community-wide "curriculum."

Thus, there are two basic ways to reach out to the youth of the heritage area – through the schools, and beyond. The next section starts with the schools, and is followed by a section listing ideas for going beyond them.

4.6.1 Educational Programming for School Children

A change underway now in state learning standards offers a major, one-time-only opportunity for the Commission to participate in local efforts to adjust the curriculum to community needs. New York's Pre-K−12 educational system, along with those of all U.S. states and territories, is in the process of adjusting its existing New York State Learning Standards and core curriculum to conform to a new Common Core State Standards Initiative ("NYS Common Core Standards"). The initiative is led jointly by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with other leading national educational organizations. New York is now developing guidance materials for teachers to implement these new learning standards for all their various student populations and began releasing these in the summer of 2011. (http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_ core_standards/common_core_standards.html and http://www.corestandards.org/)

The standards address English/Language Arts and Mathematics, but flow through to all other subjects. This is not your grandmother's curriculum. In addition to serving the state's existing standards for history, social science, and science (environmental education), it is possible for heritage area partners to help schools meet state standards in such areas as "informational reading" (the ability of students to gain and act on critical information and instructions, important as a foundation in vocational training), literacy in social studies and separating fact from fiction, and viewing the world through multiple perspectives and the ideas of different cultures. As teachers shift their instructional methods, they will also be including up-to-the-minute technologies, such as interactive whiteboards that will permit "virtual field trips" and a much-enriched classroom experience or using Google Earth to teach about, say, the explorations of Christopher Columbus.

Heritage area programs can influence interpretive attractions' abilities to serve the state curriculum. As one participant in a focus group on educational outreach during the management planning process observed, "Albany [the New York State Department of Education] would love seeing the common curriculum surface in non-educational material."

The heritage area's role is to serve as a clearinghouse for all parts of this equation – schools, teachers, and curriculum supervisors of such academic programs as music, arts, and social studies; sites and community organizations; and local governments – and provide outreach and training opportunities. The heritage area should build strong connections among all involved and become the first place that educators – school-based or not –

will turn to, in order to create innovative programs. These might include a scholastic honors program for high school students or interaction with community-based programs described in the next section.

The heritage area could also work with interpretive attractions and programs to be available for classroom presentations and supplement on-site interpretive staff (both professional and volunteer), who may at times be unable to serve multiple groups visiting at the same time.

The Commission will establish an advisory committee or working group of educators (school-based, site-based, park-based) to:

(1) Guide program development for services and outreach and establish priorities;

(2) Provide advice on the heritage area's interface with the development of NYS Common Core Standards;

(3) Assist the heritage area in influencing schools' use of heritage area sites and community programs to meet state standards (and vice versa);

(4) Help develop school-based programs to help students understand their communities' civic ambitions for heritage development and tourism and to gain knowledge and direct experience of heritage tourism.

ACTION: Establish an advisory committee or working group to advise the Commission and heritage area partners on curriculum-based education programs and strategies, priorities, and the shaping of programs in general for engaging the region's young people.

ACTION: Ensure that local students experience an expansive, innovative educational program that instills a sense of appreciation and pride for the community and environment in which they live and offers an integrated view of community history and environmental conditions.

ACTION: Work with local schools to establish a "heritage civics" program encompassing learning about local government, the state parks, tourism, outdoor recreation, and the heritage area within state standards.

ACTION: Work with partners on interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that use local history and historic sites to meet state curriculum requirements.

ACTION: Work with partners on interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that use local natural sites to meet state curriculum requirements in science and to foster environmental stewardship.

ACTION: Establish a scholastic honors program that encourages high school students to undertake special projects in research, interpretation, conservation, the arts, local government, peoples of the region, and other subjects.

ACTION: Identify specific needs for teacher training (workshops, webinars, continuing education classes, etc.) to enable teachers to utilize heritage area sites effectively for student education; encourage sites to work collaboratively to meet these needs.

ACTION: Recruit a volunteer corps of educators to act as special traveling docents for school groups, representing a collaborative group of interpretive attractions, to be available for classroom presentations and supplement on-site interpretive staff (both professional and volunteer).

4.6.2 Other Youth Outreach

The Commission and heritage area partners are perhaps more free than the schools themselves in considering how to organize the community and their programs to engage children in learning and experiences related to the National Heritage Area's themes, goals, and leadership needs.

An early "flagship" program for the Commission is the Junior Ranger program (see sidebar). This is seen as a kind of entry-level program for engaging children individually, not through schools, although schools can also use the program. In choosing it as an early action, the Commission considered several advantages. First, that it offers the advantage of being beneficial for both visiting and resident children and their families. Moreover, it has focused the participating sites on considering their role in assisting the heritage area and within a network of sites all interpreting heritage area resources, priming their thoughts and ambitions for the next round of collaboration. And finally, because visiting families are likely to enjoy the program, it offers an immediate way to begin encouraging the circulation of visitors throughout the heritage area that is a key objective for the heritage tourism aspect of this plan.

The Junior Ranger program applies to children ages 7 to 12. For local children and their families, the Commission regards the Junior Ranger program as the first rung on a ladder of other potential programs that will engage these children at additional age intervals all the way through college-age levels and beyond. These might include the following ideas, sketched here for later development.

Junior Ambassadors

A Junior Ambassadors program could be designed for the next age group to overlap with the Junior Ranger program, for ages 8 to 14. It would be tied to the Ambassadors program described in Chapter 3, Niagara's Visitor Experience (itself a major tool for community engagement). Fully realized, the Ambassadors program could evolve from simple workshops and hospitality training opportunities for volunteers into a community of networked volunteers that embraces a social component as well as a learning component. Recognition, special benefits at sites, and other activities could stimulate participation

Old Fort Niagara's School Programs

Old Fort Niagara offers a variety of programs that can be customized to teachers' lesson plans. In addition to the programs it offers for school field trips and in the classroom, it offers to collaborate with teachers to customize distance learning programs. For its part in the National Heritage Area's new Junior Ranger program, has highlighted an existing experience called "Blue Coats along the Niagara."

School Visits

- *"Join the Kings Army" – no specific age, guided tour and living history*
- *"Work and Play in 1779" – no specific age, guided tour, living history, games*
- *"A Day & Night in the Fort" – for seventh graders and scouting groups (age 8-12)*
- *"Rivals for Empire" – for elementary to middle school students, two to three hours in May and June*
- *Guided tours – no specific age, two hours, $5/ student*
- *Overnight visit for fourth graders*

Programs for Classrooms

- *"A Soldier's Life" – half or full day, in-class visit by staff member dressed in military uniform of one of the fort's historic garrisons, educational programs*
- *"Gold Laced Coat" – half or full day, in-class visit by a staff member dressed as a uniformed officer, uses Helen Fuller Orton's novel "Gold Laced Coat" to teach students about the life of French soldiers and civilians in the fort*

and cohesion. At the point that this fully realized version of an Ambassadors program becomes viable, the best approach in designing a Junior Ambassadors program or curriculum may be to recruit the Ambassadors themselves to assist those experienced in offering other kinds of youth programs. The schools should also be involved, perhaps through the Future Business Leaders of America program (see sidebar) or other programs already designed to bring community leaders in contact with students.

Conservation Corps Activities

Student conservation corps – small groups of older teenagers organized as crews with experienced young leaders, supervised by a central organization that works with sponsoring parks and sites to place the crews to undertake such physical, construction projects as trail-building – are a long-standing activity across the nation that could be enlisted here in the effort to design continuing age-appropriate programs for older students. Both the Western District of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and local departments for parks and recreation are potential regional and local partners for the heritage area in designing youth conservation corps activities. The Student Conservation Association (SCA), JobCorps, and other state and regional programs are sources for such programs (see sidebar on SCA, one example only).

Other Possibilities for Youth Engagement

There are other models for programs to engage youth for ages 18 and up to meet goals for the heritage area and participants in leadership development, service learning, and community projects. These include internships, seasonal employment, and apprentice programs. The scholastic honors program for high school students mentioned under section 4.6.1 would also provide individual opportunities for engagement.

Besides the Student Conservation Association described above, there are other national and regional leaders in the "national service movement" that can offer advice and highly motivated college graduates, including the well-known AmeriCorps program (http://www.americorps.gov/) and City Year, whose participants serve full-time in schools for 10 months working to improve student attendance, behavior and course performance in English and math. City Year's approach includes a focus on community and school improvements, in which participants "organize

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's Junior Ranger Program

Junior Ranger programs have existed in many National Parks for years. Typically, they are geared to school-aged children, but people of ages have enjoyed participating in the program. The Junior Ranger program allows school-age children the flexibility to interact within a park or heritage area at their own convenience. Participants can choose what sites they wish to see and what activities they wish to complete, based on personal interest, age, and availability. Participants completing a set number of activities can receive a specially designed Junior Ranger badge to signify their accomplishment.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's Junior Ranger program is designed to encourage children ages 7 to 12 to discover the heritage area's history, culture, heritage and natural resources. A guidebook helps participants find thematically related sites in the National Heritage Area and nearby, where they will learn specific knowledge pertaining to the area's themes (see Chapter 2, Niagara's Interpretive Presentation) and then complete a corresponding activity. Once they have completed the required number of activities from among the choices provided, they submit their activity guide to an official and receive a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Junior Ranger Badge.

Beginning in the summer of 2012, visitors and residents will be able to obtain the guidebook from area hotels, tourism bureaus, and partnering sites or download it from the heritage area's website. Longer term, to maintain pace with current technological trends, the program may be made available through a digital application available for web-browsers and smart phones. The use of web-based technology would allow greater participation by the National Heritage Area's many international visitors who could easily configure the program into their native language.

The Junior Ranger program is also available to schools. It provides an ideal framework for area school districts to begin to develop curriculum that will meet the New York State Core Standards as they correlate to Social Studies, English/ Language Arts, and Science. Through field trips and "virtual visits," students would be able to understand the role played by this region in the fabric of United States History and World History. Students could be introduced to environmental stewardship, geology, and many other facets of the Earth Science curriculum.

The Junior Ranger program offers young people who reside in the heritage area and nearby the opportunity to learn by "beginning in their backyard." As the heritage area's official description concludes, "Optimistically, the possible benefits of this approach would instill in youth a foundation of stewardship, civic pride, cultural understanding, and appreciation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area that would last a lifetime."

Future Business Leaders of America

The Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) is an organization that may have great potential for assisting the heritage area in aiding students in understanding community functions and goals for tourism. Many schools across the country support student participation in FBLA by supporting teacher-advisors, classroom time, and field trips. Programs are available for middle school, high school, and college groups. Much of its work is organized around encouraging students to compete, both individually and as groups, at levels from regional to national. The key will be to connect to elements of the program involving service learning and community-based school projects. (http://www.fbla.org/)

The organization's goals are to:

- *Develop competent, aggressive business leadership;*
- *Strengthen the confidence of students in themselves and their work;*
- *Create more interest in and understanding of American business enterprise;*
- *Encourage members in the development of individual projects that contribute to the improvement of home, business, and community;*
- *Develop character, prepare for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism;*
- *Encourage and practice efficient money management;*
- *Encourage scholarship and promote school loyalty;*
- *Assist students in the establishment of occupational goals; and*
- *Facilitate the transition from school to work.*

and lead activities, celebrations and projects to improve the community and school environment which includes performing physical service such as: painting murals, planting community gardens, renovating schools and refurbishing community centers." (http://www.cityyear.org/whatwedo.aspx).

Local civic-service and business groups, including (but not limited to) such examples as YWCA, YMCA, Kiwanis, Rotary, and business and professional associations, may be able to offer help for the necessary program development and community outreach, including recruiting adult volunteers. For apprentice programs, local trades organizations or artists' guilds may be able to offer assistance, particularly if the heritage area chooses to focus on providing experience in the building trades in association with rehabilitating older buildings. In addition, there are four youth organizations that offer extensive programs that could be compatible with the heritage area's programs to reach out beyond the school system: Girl Scouts of Western New York; the Greater Niagara Frontier Council of the Boy Scouts of America, which reaches more than 20,000 scouting participants and adult volunteers; Niagara Falls Boys and Girls Club; and Niagara County 4-H.

ACTION: Continue the Junior Ranger Program and cultivate it as an anchor for continued collaboration and research and for expanded educational programming.

ACTION: Develop additional ways for individual engagement with the sites and programs of the heritage area, at appropriate age intervals (reaching ages from approximately 6 to 26).

ACTION: Include a "Junior Ambassador" opportunity in cooperation with the regular Ambassador program described in Chapter 3.

ACTION: Seek collaboration or assistance from the Student Conservation Association, the Western District of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in creating programs to serve parks and trails for resident youth.

ACTION: Partner with local trades organizations or artists' guilds in creating training or apprentice programs in preservation and conservation trades and skills.

ACTION: Partner with regionally based youth organizations to encourage them to adapt their programs to the needs of heritage area attractions and vice versa.

Student Conservation Association

A potential national partner in recruiting youth corps for involvement in is the Student Conservation Association, a long-serving national program with a variety of programs centered on the conservation corps concept. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area offers several advantages in seeking to involve the SCA here: its existing experience with New York State parks (http://www.thesca.org/newsroom/conservation-corps-puts-200-youth-work-new-york-state-parks); a National Park Service relationship (SCA has a long-standing relationship with NPS); the potential of a creating a model for other National Heritage Areas in designing programs for the Niagara Falls area, and potentially the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor as well; and an urban, diverse population, much like those the SCA is working to reach in some of its programs.

SCA has two programs: its widely recognized, traditional summertime National Conservation Crews, for ages 15-19, which are fielded to applicant communities across the nation; and Community Programs, which are tailored to serve selected urban areas nationwide. Niagara Falls and Buffalo are not currently among these urban areas; only Chicago, Detroit, and Milwaukee are served throughout the Great Lakes region and there are none in either New York State or Ohio.

The SCA generally recruits students from around the nation for assignment anywhere its programs are operating. It offers wonderful opportunities for students already motivated to seek out such an experience. As stated on its website, "SCA recruits nationally for all of our positions. We find it very challenging to recruit 'local' applicants for positions 'in their backyard' because part of the experience an Intern or Crew Member seeks is to work in an area outside of their home state or residence" (http://thesca.org/partners/administrative-process/partner-faqs#contact, accessed 2/23/12). Bringing interested youths from around the country to mingle with crews based here could enrich a program designed to focus on resident participants.

There are a few exceptions to SCA's focus on nationwide recruiting and assignment, however. For its internship program, SCA will work with local partners on signing up intern candidates identified locally. And through its more limited Community Programs, SCA offers year-round opportunities to "engage diverse high school students in major U.S. cities who may lack access to the natural environment and green job opportunities." The program is not in Niagara and Erie counties; both National Heritage Areas serving this region (Niagara Falls, Erie Canal) and New York's Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation could combine to persuade SCA to bring a program here. The program offers two variations, the Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) and Summer Community Crews. As stated on SCA's website, the CLC invites participants to:

- *Volunteer on weekends throughout the school year in the city where you live.*
- *Build trails, restore river and lakefront environments, and conserve habitats.*
- *Learn about your environment through field trips, weekend camping excursions, and*
- *Give back to your community through service projects.*
- *And, we will encourage you to join an SCA summer [backcountry or "frontcountry"] crew the next summer, to experience the outdoors away from home.*

A member of a six- to seven-week summer Community Crew member is asked to:

- *Commute each day to and from a central meeting place where you meet with your leader before heading out to work.*
- *Complete trail maintenance and site restoration projects in national, regional, and state parks.*
- *Learn about your local environment through field trips led by your Crew Leader.*
- *Plan and go on a recreational camping trip where you will learn outdoor skills, and visit local parks.*
- *Community Crews consist of two leaders and six members or two leaders and 10 members. Participants are either compensated for their work or receive credit for community service hours (http://thesca.org/serve and http://thesca.org/serve/community-programs, accessed 2/23/12).*

4.7 Organizing and Managing for Community Engagement

The ambitious programs described in this chapter require adequate staffing, a committee structure to command Commission attention, and community support. Ideally, a staff educator position would be created for the Commission's staff, to help develop, coordinate, and serve programs and recruit partners and community support. Programs contemplated here require great attention to detail and execution; they cannot be taken lightly, for it will take years to fine-tune some of these programs. Community expectations, once stimulated, will be high and enthusiastic and should be met with a deep commitment to community service as well as engagement. Startup could be done on a pilot or limited basis, to test concepts and begin putting the organizational staffing and structure in place, in order to proceed with highest priority activities for community engagement.

For the Commission's organization structure, described above are two committees, (1) a working group or subcommittee of the Interpretive Committee to focus on adult education programming and create a short-range strategic plan that includes (but is not limited to) a focus on arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events; and (2) an advisory committee or working group to advise the Commission and heritage area partners on curriculum-based education programs and strategies, priorities, and the shaping of programs in general for engaging the region's young people.

NFNHA Kickoff Meeting

Chapter 5 – Preservation, Conservation, & Resource Stewardship

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area includes a unique array of cultural and natural resources that reflect a heritage of regional, national and international interest and importance. Extending from the cataracts just above the American Falls to the outfall of the Niagara River into Lake Ontario, the primary portion of the heritage area includes all of the City of Niagara Falls and the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown and the westernmost portions of the Town of Porter and Town of Lewiston all of which are located in Niagara County, New York. In addition, there are specific cultural and natural resources not contiguous with the primary portion of the heritage area that are located in Niagara and Erie counties. These properties are listed and described in Appendix B. Within the primary heritage area boundary there is marked differences in character, appearance and issues between the urban areas of the City of Niagara Falls, the Villages of Youngstown and Lewiston, and rural areas in between. Also there are differing perspectives from the cultural groups that have historically inhabited the area.

This chapter outlines a program through which heritage area and its partners can support preservation of cultural resources, conservation of natural resources and stewardship strategies for both. It also focuses on established best practices and recent innovations through which cultural and natural resources are preserved and conserved. (Also refer to Chapter 6, *Community Revitalization* for issues and methods relating to community planning and revitalization.) Coordination with existing historic preservation and environmental conservation programs at the international, federal, and state levels along with the strengthening of local preservation and conservation efforts in identifying, designating, protecting, interpreting and promoting significant resources is a key factor in accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth by the heritage area. Success also depends upon the cooperation and collaboration of key cultural groups, academia, nonprofit organizations, the business sector, and governmental jurisdictions as important heritage area partners.

5.1 Vision and Goals for Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship

The *Environmental Assessment* for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area outlines the planning process through which this management plan was prepared. The 'Purpose and Need' (Chapter 1 of the Environmental Assessment) outlines the vision, mission, and goals that were developed for the heritage area as part of the planning process. In part, the heritage area's vision states that the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will enable "growth of a sustainable regional economy and the conservation of its natural and cultural resources in ways that benefit and unite its people and places." Also the mission statement directs the heritage area organization to work directly with a network of partners. The effective and responsible stewardship of the heritage area's cultural and natural resources will rely heavily on coordination and collaboration with the partnership network.

Nine goals were identified and adopted for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area addressing various areas of interest and potential action that are stated in Chapter 1 of the management plan. Two of these goals closely address issues and actions associated with the preservation, conservation and stewardship of natural and cultural resources:

> **Historic Preservation –** Maximize the heritage area's significant cultural resources and landscapes as working community assets.
>
> **Nature and the River –** Support restoration and enhancement of the heritage area's natural resources and environment using a sustainable approach that engages the public and develops an appreciation for the Niagara River and its associated natural landscape.

To accomplish these goals, the NFNHA will assist its partners in developing and implementing projects and programs that contribute to the preservation, conservation, and stewardship of significant cultural and natural resources in the heritage area and the region as a whole.

5.1.1 The Historic Preservation Approach

In the Preferred Alternative adopted by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission the following objectives were outlined in developing an approach for the goal for historic preservation:

- Develop historic context statements and engage researchers in using the region's historic resources as a living laboratory.
- Collaborate with local partners in establishing and implementing an oral history project coordinated with the central database and research program noted above.
- Assist local and regional partners in establishing and supporting a central database for historical information, documents, and research.
- Encourage local governments to prepare/update preservation plans and historic inventories; and apply for the federal Certified Local Government (CLG) program with its planning grants and technical assistance.
- Support local advocacy organizations in preparing a regional preservation plan for the heritage area, building on state and local plans.
- Encourage local advocates in preserving historic resources, neighborhoods, and commercial centers
- Support comprehensive local efforts to stabilize, rehabilitate and restore historic buildings and structures in the National Heritage Area to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial districts.
- Maintain a clearinghouse of grant opportunities and other financial incentives for funding historic preservation projects and revitalizing local business districts across the Heritage Area.

The intent behind the Historic Preservation approach is to establish the heritage area organization as: 1) a leader, coordinator and advocate for historic preservation in the communities located within the primary heritage area boundary including the City of Niagara Falls, the Village of Lewiston, and the Village of Youngstown; 2) a facilitator in strengthening a countywide historic preservation action network in Niagara County; and 3) a partner with Preservation Buffalo Niagara in representing historic preservation interests, concerns and programs in the Erie/Niagara county area.

5.1.2 The Environmental Conservation Approach

In the Preferred Alternative selected by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission the following objectives were outlined in developing an approach to Environmental Conservation (referred to as the 'Nature and the River' goal):

- Support other organizations in restoring ecosystems within and along the Niagara River, Escarpment, and Gorge.
- Encourage interpretation of Native American perspectives on relationships between culture and nature.
- Develop an incentive strategy to promote top-priority Niagara River Greenway projects.
- Provide educational and interpretive programming that support environmental goals and objectives set forth in the Niagara River Greenway plan. Accord greater consideration to applications for funding that is consistent with the plan's goals.
- Participate in and encourage local initiatives for restoring ecosystems along the river.
- Create and promote opportunities for visitors to enjoy local foods and beverages.
- Encourage appreciation of the region's agriculture resulting from the unique microclimate and natural resources, including Native American perspectives.
- Assist in the recognition, restoration and enhancement of resources and landscapes.

The general intent behind the Environmental Conservation approach is for the heritage area organization to communicate appropriate concerns, values, and best practices through its education and interpretive programs that promote sustainability, resource stewardship, and a conservation ethic. Heritage area projects will be designed, constructed, and implemented in a manner consistent with resource conservation and sustainability objectives. The heritage area organization will also maintain close communication with local and regional environmental conservation agencies and organizations and will consider partnering on projects that have shared objectives and outcomes.

5.2 Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship at the Regional Level

Planning and implementation at the regional level is one of the key components for community success in the new economy. The State of New York has recently embraced this idea with the merging of its planning councils and economic development entities

into a single, regional organization. Now referred to as Regional Economic Development Councils, each council is comprised of representatives who are regional leaders in business, industry, education and the non-profit sector. Each council also has local government representation consisting of elected officials from each county in the region who serve in an ex-officio capacity. Each regional council has prepared a vision statement and strategic plan specific to the needs of the respective region. State agencies have been directed by the governor to consolidate and prioritize the funding of projects using these strategic plans as a primary factor in the awarding of grants.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area lies within the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC) which consists of five counties--Niagara, Erie, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Allegheny. Tourism is identified as a targeted industry in the WNYREDC strategic plan with attention given to marketing and attraction development. Also the Niagara County Community College Culinary Institute and the Niagara Falls Experience Center are listed as a specific priority projects. However, an equally important component in developing an effective heritage tourism program is preserving and enhancing the built environment in the region's communities along with the natural and cultural landscapes of its rural areas. Such efforts improve the quality of life for residents and offer a scenic context for visitors touring the region.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will develop a coalition of resource stewardship interests to form an alliance that promotes historic preservation and environmental conservation as an economic development tool with the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council including a list of programs and projects that would have a regional impact.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara

Preservation Buffalo Niagara (PBN) is the region's leading historic preservation nonprofit and is involved with a variety of initiatives including special events, heritage tours, preservation technical assistance and cultural resource surveys. Although past efforts have focused primarily on Erie County, the organization's bylaws state that both Erie and Niagara counties are its primary area of focus. In addition, the organization's mission is to "identify, preserve, protect, promote and revitalize historically architecturally significant sites, structures, neighborhoods, commercial districts and landscapes in western New York" which is defined as a seven county area. PBN is recognized as a 'Preservation Colleague' with the Preservation League of New York State and a 'Local Partner' with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A partnership with PBN that includes its Niagara County counterpart, The Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, would immediately align the heritage area with the strongest preservation advocacy organization in the region and expand preservation initiatives and programming in Niagara County. Also the heritage area organization should join forces with PBN, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and other historic preservation interests in the region, to form a coalition that will approach the WNYEDC to include regional historic preservation efforts in the next WNYEDC strategic plan update.

ACTION: The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should use technical and administrative resources available through Preservation Buffalo Niagara to strengthen historic preservation advocacy in the heritage area.

Niagara River Greenway

The vision statement for the Niagara River Greenway reads that it is to be "a world-class corridor of places, parks and landscapes that celebrates and interprets our unique natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and heritage resources and provides access to and connections between these important resources while giving rise to economic opportunities for the region." The latest version of the Greenway plan was completed in April 2007 and includes an inventory of associated resources, identifies transportation issues, provides suggested matching fund sources, and potential organizational partnerships. The Greenway plan includes preservation and conservation issues and actions.

ACTION: The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should approach the Niagara River Greenway Commission to develop, support, and advance heritage area projects and programs.

5.2.1 Regional Historic Preservation Plan

A regional historic preservation plan, perhaps for the seven county area, would identify historic resources, districts and cultural landscapes that need to be preserved and enhanced. The plan would also outline a regional preservation strategy for program participants including minimum standards, best practices, and effective incentives. Program participants should include local governments, regional and local preservation organizations, tourism-oriented businesses, and academic interests. Also smaller local governments and organizations in villages and rural towns that might not ordinarily have the means or technical expertise would benefit from a regional approach.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will develop a coalition of regional historic preservation interests to collaborate on the preparation of a regional historic preservation plan that would include historic preservation strategies and assistance to smaller local governments such as the Village of Youngstown and Town of Porter.

5.2.2 Regional Cultural Resource Inventory and Database

A regional cultural resource database would serve both as a comprehensive inventory for historic preservation efforts and as an information source for interested property owners, students and visitors. Subsections 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 below address the implementation of a similar program specific to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. These efforts can be combined or conducted separately depending on the degree of interest expressed by partner organizations, the amount of information to be captured, and the timing for project startup.

The inventory can build on the cultural resource database established and maintained by the State of New York. The inventory should: 1) be maintained in a digital format at the regional level by an appropriate organization or agency; 2) should be accessible online to heritage area partners and the general public with a user-friendly interface; 3) links should be embedded in the inventory to provide access to available research and publications associated with each resource; and 4) the information should be updated on a regular basis. Preservation Buffalo Niagara currently offers a similar database of this type on its website featuring historic resources in the City of Buffalo accessible at http://buffaloah.com.

ACTION: A strategy should be adopted by the regional historic preservation coalition to create a comprehensive regional cultural resource database that is user-friendly and accessible to the general public that includes an inventory of historic buildings and structures, sites, and cultural landscapes relating to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

5.2.3 Designation of Significant Historic/Cultural Resources

Once the database and related inventories are completed, individual and groups of related historic/cultural resources should be analyzed for significance and nominated accordingly through established recognition programs at the statewide, regional, national and international levels. Agencies and organizations can then endeavor to conduct ongoing research for these significant resources and manage for the protection and enhancement of these resources beyond what is currently provided. This research would also inform the public interpretive program described in other chapters of this management plan. The interpretive program also creates awareness for residents and visitors about these significant resources, who then develop an appreciation and understanding for the resource, which then builds public support for resource protective measures, the heritage area program, and an improved quality of life.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list in the United States of the historic places such as districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of regional, statewide and local significance. The National Register program is administered by the National Park Service (www.nps.gov/nr/) with assistance provided by Tribal and State Historic Preservation Offices. Private individuals, organizations, local governments, and American Indian tribes often initiate this process and prepare the necessary documentation. A professional review board in each state considers the proposed nominations and makes a recommendation on its eligibility.

In addition to the honor of being recognized, listing in the National Register has certain benefits. Designated properties, along with properties considered eligible for designation, are to be given consideration in planning for federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects as outlined in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Federal agencies are to allow all interested parties and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on all projects affecting historic properties either listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register.

National Register properties are eligible for certain federal tax benefits. Owners of National Register properties may qualify for a 20 percent investment tax credit for the rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures including commercial, industrial, and rental residential buildings. Federal tax deductions are also available for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures.

It is also important to emphasize that owners of private property listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose provided that no federal monies are involved.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should seek support from property owners, the New York State Historic Preservation Office, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and local governments for the nomination of eligible individual properties, historic districts, and multiple properties related by theme associated with the heritage area to the National Register of Historic Places.

National Historic Landmarks Program

A National Historic Landmark (NHL) is a historic building, site, structure, object, or district that represents an outstanding aspect of American history and culture. Also administered by the National Park Service (www.nps.gov/nhl/), NHLs are part of the National Register of Historic Places program. Properties that are so designated by the Secretary of the Interior are nationally significant historic places because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States of America. More than 2,400 historic places across the nation have received this designation which is less than three percent of the total number of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are more National Historic Landmarks in New York (262) than any other state in the nation, four of which are located in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

Potential NHLs are identified primarily through theme studies undertaken by the National Park Service. These studies provide a comparative analysis of properties associated with a specific area of American history. Theme studies conducted by the National Park Service relevant to Western New York may found at www.nps.gov/nhl/themes/themes-allnew.htm.

The benefits for NHL listing include limited federal grants through the Historic Preservation Fund and funding through agencies in some states. In prioritizing grant funding, NHLs frequently receive higher priority than other National Register properties. There are also federal income tax incentives available for donating easements and for rehabilitating income-generating historic buildings. Owners of NHLs are eligible to receive a bronze plaque, available free of charge, to display on the property and historic preservation technical assistance available through the National Park Service.

The National Park Service is also responsible by law for monitoring the condition of NHLs. Information on the condition of landmarks and potential associated threats is provided in an update published online. The update and individual downloadable information sheets have frequently been used as valuable tools for fundraising and influencing public policy. This information is also used by the National Park Service to plan its assistance programs and aids in grant-making decisions.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should partner with the other National Heritage Areas in New York and associated preservation organizations in support of a National Historic Landmark Special Theme Study for the 'Transportation and Industry along the Great Lakes' theme that incorporates the eastern portion of the Great Lakes basin including the Niagara River, St. Lawrence Seaway, Hudson River, and Erie Canalway along with the nomination of associated eligible properties as National Historic Landmarks.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention (www.whc.unesco.org/en/list) recognizes sites of outstanding universal value and global natural and/or cultural importance on the World Heritage List. The first step a country must take to nominate sites to the World Heritage List is to make an inventory of its important natural and cultural heritage sites located within its boundaries referred to as the 'Tentative List.' The list provides preliminary information on properties that a country may submit for consideration within the next five to ten years. The agency responsible for submitting the Tentative List for the United States is the National Park Service. Niagara Falls is not currently on the list.

Currently, there are 936 properties (725 cultural, 183 natural, and 28 mixed) in 153 different countries worldwide that have been designated and placed on the World Heritage List. An additional 1,504 properties from 162 different countries are currently on the Tentative List. The United States has 21 designated properties on the World Heritage List (eight cultural, twelve natural, and one mixed, with one considered as endangered) with an additional 13 properties on the Tentative List. Canada has 15 designated properties (six cultural and nine natural, none of which are considered endangered) with an additional nine properties on the Tentative List. The United States and Canada currently share the UNESCO 'transboundary' designation for two properties that cross international borders.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should seek support from the National Park Service and a Canadian partner organization for a joint nomination of Niagara Falls to the World Heritage List as a 'mixed property' of both natural and cultural significance.

UNESCO International Biosphere Reserves

These recognized sites must demonstrate an innovative approach to conservation and sustainable development by reconciling issues of biological and cultural diversity with economic and social development. They serve as testing grounds for sustainable development from a local to an international perspective. There are currently 553 Biosphere Reserve sites in 107 countries. In the United States, there are 48 designated biosphere reserves including seven that are located in National Parks that are also listed as World Heritage Sites: Everglades, Redwood, Glacier, Yellowstone, Olympic, Great Smoky Mountains and Hawaii Volcanoes.

It is worthy of note that Canada's portion of the Niagara Escarpment is an International Biosphere Reserve designated under the UNESCO program (www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/). Having powers similar to that of a Canadian municipality – deriving from the Canadian system of government, not the UNESCO program, which has no regulatory power – the Niagara Escarpment Commission in Ontario regulates zoning and land use for development on or near the escarpment. The Niagara Escarpment Plan provides land use designations, development criteria and related permitted uses, including farming, forestry and mineral extraction. It also outlines a strategy for creating a greenway of 130 existing and proposed parks and open spaces that are linked by the Bruce Trail, Canada's oldest and longest hiking trail.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should use information provided by Ontario's Niagara Escarpment Commission to provide interpretation for the New York portion of the escarpment that is located within the heritage area boundary.

5.3 Historic Preservation in Niagara County

On a smaller scale, the heritage area organization should seek to partner with historic preservation interests within Niagara County, including the County Historian, in forming a countywide network. This advocacy network would market historic preservation and heritage tourism as an economic development tool and would assist local governments in adopting or enhancing historic preservation regulations, standards and best practices. This alliance would also be a primary partner with Preservation Buffalo Niagara to strengthen preservation advocacy in the area and duplicate the successful programs of the PBN organization in Niagara County. The programs that could be offered include workshops, design and technical assistance for historic homeowners along with a historic preservation information clearinghouse for residents, property owners and organizations. The alliance, with support from PBN, could also offer to prepare design guidelines for historic neighborhoods and commercial districts and encourage local governments to provide tax incentives and eliminate code disincentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties.

Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc.
The Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. is the only non-governmental group in Niagara County who advocates for historic preservation. The organization's mission is to "discover, protect and revitalize the cultural heritage and related architectural beauty of the city and to continually educate our community and our visitors about our history."
ACTION: The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should partner with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society (NFHPS) and other historic preservation interests in Niagara County, including the County Historian, to form a county-wide historic preservation network and coalition.

ACTION: The countywide historic preservation coalition will partner with Preservation Buffalo Niagara to introduce and duplicate successful PBN programs in Niagara County.

ACTION: The heritage area organization, as part of the countywide coalition of historic preservation organizations described above, should approach representatives from Niagara County to determine if interest exists in establishing a countywide historic preservation program and, if so, seek Certified Local Government status (see subsection 5.4.8 below) to assist in achieving countywide historic preservation goals and funding related projects.

5.4 Historic Preservation in the National Heritage Area

Although it is imperative that the heritage area organization coordinate and partner with historic preservation organizations at the county and regional levels, the primary boundary of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is entirely contained within five municipal jurisdictions in western Niagara County. The following subsections address in detail the historic preservation conceptual approach outlined in subsection 5.1.1 with

respect to these jurisdictions. This information serves as the basis for establishing a framework for historic preservation in the heritage area.

5.4.1 Research and Historical Context Statements

An important aspect of historic preservation, and a successful heritage tourism program, is to have a clear and detailed understanding of the historical context for the heritage area and region. Although a substantial amount of research about popular historical subjects, events and personalities has been conducted by professional and avocational historians, additional focused research is needed to represent the perspective of certain under-represented cultural groups, to fill some gaps in the historical record, and to assist with the evaluation of the significance of undesignated cultural resources and landscapes. This comprehensive body of work must then be publically shared and used to accurately inform the heritage area's interpretive program.

Potential actions have been identified for historical research and the development of historical context statements in the heritage area. These actions include the following:

- Establish an advisory group comprised of professional and avocational interests along with a representative from the National Park Service to outline a program for historical research and devise research protocols (see Subsection 5.4.2 below).
- The advisory group will provide oversight for the initial preparation of detailed historical context statements by qualified individuals to guide writing, research, and designations.
- The historical context statements will be posted in a location that is readily accessible to the general public and easily editable by appropriate parties.
- The historical context statements will identify subjects and topics where additional research is needed. Professional, avocational, and student researchers will be encouraged to focus their efforts on these areas of interest.
- The heritage area organization will devise a means to distribute information about the historical contexts, important stories, and new research associated with Niagara Falls National Heritage Area through historical publications, websites, newspaper articles, seminars, etc.

5.4.2 Research Advisory Group

The heritage area organization should take the initiative in hosting and sponsoring the research advisory group indicated above as one of the actions to take in the short-term. The group should consist of at least one representative from each of the following organizations: 1) the National Park Service; 2) a heritage attraction within the boundary of the heritage area; 3) a thematically related heritage attraction in Erie or Niagara County outside of the heritage area boundary; 4) a professor of history from a local college or university; 5) a local professional or avocational historian; 6) the official historian for Niagara County; 7) an interpretive planner or specialist; 8) a school district curriculum development coordinator; and 9) a history/social sciences teacher from a public or private secondary or elementary school. The group should be chaired by a member of

the National Heritage Area Commission and seek to establish research protocols, citation requirements and overall best practices for those who will prepare the detailed historical context statements. The statements should be organized and prepared in a manner that follows the heritage area interpretive themes.

The suggested standards should then be reviewed by a specialist with the National Park Service who has a familiarity with the development of interpretive plans and historical context statements with comments provided. After review and approval of the standards by the governing body of the heritage area organization, individuals and organizations should be solicited to prepare the historical context statement(s). The research advisory group may serve as a selection committee to make recommendations on the proposals submitted with final decision made by the heritage area organization. It may also be useful for the group to review drafts of submittals provided by the individual or organization selected to prepare the historical context statements.

The advisory group should also advise the heritage area organization on a detailed outreach strategy to engage students' at all educational levels in research and projects that might assist the heritage area. The historical context statements should be incorporated into a website maintained by the heritage area organization. Although the integrity of the original document should be maintained in some capacity, there would be great benefit in creating an editable version that could be updated using an online "wiki" tool that is password-protected. Members of the research advisory group and an extended network of scholars and experts could be given access to this version so that ongoing updates and edits can be made. This would allow the historical context statements to be revised as new research is prepared and information revealed.

ACTION: The Research Advisory Group should be created as a subcommittee of the heritage area organization using the criteria outlined in this subsection.

5.4.3 Oral History Project

An oral history program will be developed in partnership with a local and/or regional historical organization to document the stories and experiences of current and past residents and individuals associated with the historical context statements and the interpretive themes of the heritage area. (Oral history is also addressed in subsection 4.5.2 in Chapter 4.) The research advisory group may be well-positioned to internally assist the heritage area organization in this endeavor as well. However, similar projects are already underway with partner organizations including the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society who should be recognized as a primary partner in this effort. Also coordination with other oral history initiatives in the larger region, such as the *Memories of Niagara* project in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, is suggested.

It is important that the collecting of oral histories conform to standards and best practices established by recognized authorities on the subject. One such authority is the Oral History Association, an internationally recognized organization comprised of historians, librarians, archivists, students, journalists, teachers, and academic scholars who provide professional guidance, technical advice and share research. An excellent definition for oral history is provided by the organization:

> Oral history refers both to a method of recording and preserving oral testimony and to the product of that process. It begins with an audio or video recording of a first person account made by an interviewer with an interviewee (also referred to as narrator), both of whom have the conscious intention of creating a permanent record to contribute to an understanding of the past. A verbal document, the oral history, results from this process and is preserved and made available in different forms to other users, researchers, and the public.

Detailed information on principles and best practices for oral history is available on the organization's website at www.oralhistory.org.

ACTION: Coordinate with other historical organizations in the countywide network in conducting oral history interviews using professional standards and best practices.

5.4.4 Cultural Resource Surveys

Historic/cultural resource surveys are vital for effective preservation planning. A cultural/historic resources survey is the principal tool for the identification of historic properties, districts and cultural landscapes placing them in a local, state and/or national historic context and evaluating their significance. Surveys provide an inventory of the built environment by systematically documenting historic properties by geographic location. Individual surveys may encompass an entire village, neighborhood in a city, rural landscape, or theme. Examples of a themed survey may be 'the historic Rosenwald Schools of New York' or 'Properties in New York Associated with the Underground Railroad.'

Surveys produce varying levels of information depending on the type of the survey and intended use. A reconnaissance survey is typically broad in scope, incorporates a larger geographic area or topic, and provides summary information about several identified historic/cultural resources; whereas, an intensive survey provides deeper, focused research on a specific resource or subject matter. The New York Survey and Evaluation Unit, part of the State Historic Preservation Office, provides standards and technical assistance for cultural/historic resource surveys.

The resulting inventory that is developed after one survey or a series of interrelated surveys, enables agencies and organizations to make sound decisions about the overall protection of significant historic properties and the mitigation of properties that may be impacted by new development. It is important for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area to surveys as part of its preservation planning framework for implementing the goals and strategies outlined in this management plan. Additional surveys can be conducted in partnership with the New York Office of Historic Preservation and municipal governments to assure that a comprehensive inventory of properties 50 years of age or older exist for all communities and areas within the primary heritage area boundary. This may be a means to partially fund the preparation of the historical context statements outlined in subsection 5.3.1 above and the regional cultural resource database described in subsection 5.2.2 above.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should partner with local communities and the countywide historic preservation coalition to conduct historic/cultural resource surveys of historic properties, archeological sites, geographic areas and cultural landscapes that are not adequately documented within the heritage area.

5.4.5 Historic/Cultural Resource Database for the Heritage Area

The Research Advisory Group described in Subsection 5.4.2 above should assist the National Heritage Area in establishing an inventory of heritage area resources by creating a central database for historical information. This may be managed by the heritage area organization as part of the historical context statements initiative outlined above or separately by one of the heritage area partners. (For instance, an organization such as the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University is likely to already have some of this information.) There may be a compelling reason to collect this data on a broader scale that conforms to the state's tourism or economic development regional boundaries. Subsection 5.2.2 above addresses a regional approach to developing a cultural resource database.

It is suggested that the database include detailed information on all cultural resources in the heritage area. The cultural resource inventory maintained by the New York Historic Preservation Office should serve as a starting point for the list of individual resources and districts in the region and for the minimum data fields that should be incorporated into the database. The database will subsequently be expanded to include information and resources beyond what is maintained by the State of New York. It should be kept in mind that the database may ultimately be used as a source to render virtual cultural landscapes and historic settings for interpretive purposes so the capture of information of buildings and structures that no longer exist is equally important.

The database should be created with user-friendly data entry templates to allow editing and updating by members of the research advisory group and an extended network of scholars, agencies and experts. Database capacity should accommodate multiple representative photographs for each cultural resource including current and historic images. The database should also be developed in a manner that provides a geographic information system (GIS) interface allowing resource locations to be mapped.

It is essential that an aspect of the database be accessible online to the general public in an intuitive, read-only format. An important exception is the display and provision of archeological site locations. It is standard public policy with federal and state agencies that access to such information is not publically distributed in an effort to minimize the destructive, and sometimes illegal, collecting of artifacts. The heritage area organization is strongly encouraged to conform to these policies for archeological sites located on both public and private lands.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should seek an academic or private sector partner with established GIS credentials to develop a cultural resource database that includes an inventory of historic buildings and structures, archeological sites, objects and cultural features relating to the heritage area using the criteria outlined above.

5.4.6 Virtual Archives

Since the first known documented illustration of the falls by Father Louis Hennepin who was part of the 1678 La Salle expedition, a multitude of artists have captured their experience with the falls in a variety of mediums from pencil to film. Since the 19th century, the falls have been extensively featured in tourism promotions, materials and souvenirs. Today, according to Eastman Kodak Company, the most photographed natural feature in the world is Niagara Falls.

This incredible wealth of contemporary and historical visual media is an amazing and unique asset for this heritage area. No single archives or repository can likely house all of this available material. The research advisory group should identify and work with a network of local public and collegiate libraries and archives to support and build capacity for a shared digital repository for historical information, materials, images, documents, ephemera and photographs of objects relating to Niagara Falls and the heritage area. For the short term, the 'virtual archives' should provide an online searchable, annotated catalog of images accessible to the general public and be able to receive donated digital images by users. Eventually, the virtual archives should provide access to and be indexed with the central resource database described above; offer special online exhibits; and provide links to partner heritage attractions, in the context of stories and interpretive themes relating to the heritage area.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should partner with an organization to initiate work on the virtual archives using the criteria outlined above.

5.4.7 Preservation Planning in Heritage Area Communities

New York's Municipal Home Rule Law empowers counties and municipalities to adopt and enforce local laws relating to the "protection and enhancement of its physical and visual environment" with historic/cultural resources clearly being a part of a community's built environment. The State of New York also recognizes municipal authority to regulate and preserve these resources through the regulation of land use through local zoning ordinances, enactment of the State Historic Preservation Act of 1980, historic landmarks legislation, and the Certified Local Government Program. In fact, the only way significant historic properties may receive regulatory protection from incompatible alteration and demolition by a private owner is through enactment of a local historic preservation law. These laws may be implemented either through a local zoning ordinance, a separate historic preservation ordinance, or both. In addition, New York courts have recognized upheld this authority in established case law.

Even with a strong legal framework at the state level, the State of New York's Historic Preservation Plan, *Historic Preservation at a Crossroads*, states that only about 225 (11 percent) of the 1,600 municipalities in the state have adopted local historic preservation ordinances or related regulations to protect historic and cultural resources. Only four percent have become Certified Local Governments and only five municipalities were identified to have prepared stand-alone historic preservation plans. In addition, most municipal comprehensive plans only make a passing reference to historic and cultural resources and do not promote the adoption of historic preservation strategies.

The New York Historic Preservation Office has made it a priority to provide educational materials and training programs in an effort to assist local historic preservation planning efforts. New York State law and preservation practice offer many tools for advancing smart growth goals and protecting community character. The NY-SHPO has targeted the 14 regional planning commissions, preservation organizations and groups such as the New York Conference of Mayors to develop formal training programs and resource materials to educate municipal officials, in compliance with annual training requirements, about historic preservation planning tools and strategies.

The City of Niagara Falls and the Village of Lewiston have adopted several of the historic preservation planning tools and laws available to local governments in the State of New York. The Village of Youngstown, because it is a smaller government, should devise a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for its community by seeking assistance through the state preservation programs outlined above Also assistance is available through professional circuit planners as part of the New York Planning Federation outreach programs.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should partner with local governments within the heritage area to prepare and implement the historic preservation planning tools necessary to identify, designate, preserve and protect the significant historic/ cultural resources in their communities.

5.4.8 Certified Local Government Program

The Certified Local Government Program (CLG) available through the National Park Service and managed by the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NY-SHPO) provides federal funding and technical assistance for historic preservation planning to certified local agencies. Any city, county, town, or village can be a CLG, once a determination is made by the NY-SHPO that the local historic preservation program meets state and federal standards. The standards include adopting local historic preservation legislation and appointing a qualified preservation review commission. Once reviewed and approved by the state, applications are forwarded to the National Park Service for final certification. Program benefits as indicated on the NY-SHPO website include technical preservation assistance and legal advice; direct involvement in identifying properties that may be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places; training opportunities; grants designated exclusively for CLG projects; and membership in statewide and national CLG networks.

Currently, of the 74 municipalities participating in New York's Certified Local Government Program, 13 are located in Erie and Niagara counties. Within the primary boundary of the heritage area the City of Niagara Falls and the Village of Lewiston are certified as part of this program. There is potential benefit for the Village of Youngstown in pursuing this certification. Also, from a regional planning perspective, it may be worth considering that Niagara and Erie counties seek the certification which would facilitate and partially finance the preparation of a regional historic preservation plan described in subsection 5.2.1 above.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should facilitate a discussion with representatives from the Village of Youngstown to determine if seeking Certified

Local Government status would assist the community in achieving their historic preservation goals and how such a program may be administered with a limited staff.

5.4.9 Historic/Cultural Resource Preservation and Protection

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has many significant historic/cultural resources from several historical periods that still exist today in both public and private ownership. Many of these resources have been the focus of preservation efforts by individuals and organizations for many years. The heritage area organization provides a new forum through which preservation activities can be coordinated and directed. Appendix XX of this management plan provides an historical overview and inventory of the historic/cultural resources associated with the four interpretive themes of the heritage area.

Traditionally, historic preservation activities have focused primarily upon the preservation of individual historic buildings. While this is important, the concept of a heritage area seeks to broaden the range of recognized historic resources within its boundary. Heritage areas are viewed as 'living landscapes' where community character and appearance is valued and managed in ways that promote quality of life for current and future residents and provide historic context for visitors. The following objectives and implementation strategies provide a comprehensive approach for the preservation and management of these important historic/cultural resources.

The heritage area organization will identify on a continuing basis elements of the cultural landscape that remain from the past. It will also seek the appropriate management of the identified resources using established historic preservation best practices. When public use of and/or access to a resource is allowed, the heritage area organization will integrate it as an active component of the interpretive program. The sustainable use and operation of these resources will also be a priority consideration of the heritage area.

Historic Buildings and Districts

Traditional historic preservation programs, techniques, and planning tools are typically oriented to the preservation of historic buildings. Programs offered by the New York Historic Preservation Office, the New York Preservation League, Preservation Buffalo Niagara, and local preservation initiatives will continue to be important for the identification, recognition and preservation of historic buildings associated with the heritage area.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Report prepared by the National Park Service in 2005 identified several historic resources and sites associated with the four interpretive themes of the heritage area. Twenty-one of these properties are located within the primary heritage area boundary and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places of which four are National Historic Landmarks. Almost all of these identified resources are comprised of buildings, structures or contributing buildings and structures in a historic district. This list is not comprehensive because it does not take in to account the entire historic fabric of the heritage area's communities. Also historic architectural surveys have not been completed for all portions of the heritage area. Preserving a community's historic fabric and appearance is equally as important as protecting the individual historic resources that are significant to heritage area's four interpretive themes.

The establishment of local historical commissions or historic architectural review boards can manage historic preservation efforts and promote public awareness at the municipal level. Boards or commissions can function at different levels with varying degrees of decision-making authority. The decision to establish a local historic commission, and the role of that commission, is determined by each municipality. At one end of the range is the type of commission that serves in an advisory capacity and has no regulatory authority in dictating what can or cannot be done to historic buildings. Commissions serve as local advisors, providing information to homeowners about rehabilitation projects and offering technical advice in the form of voluntary project review or providing information on best management practices through hardcopy or online publications. The opposite end of the regulatory spectrum is the adoption of a strict preservation ordinance or zoning overlay that specifically identifies which buildings are to be regulated. The commission or board has final decision making authority in reviewing proposed changes to historic properties.

ACTION: Partner with the owners of historic properties that are important to the four heritage area themes in devising a strategy to preserve and protect the historical and architectural integrity these significant resources.

ACTION: Partner with local governments and the countywide historic peservation coalition to develop historic preservation design guidelines for historic districts in the heritage area that provides guidance on the rehabilitation of historic buildings and the design of new infill construction.

ACTION: Partner with local governments and an appropriate easement receiving entity to consider implementation of a façade easement program in the heritage area that would preserve and protect the facades of significant historic buildings and offer possible incentives and tax benefits to property owners.

ACTION: Partner with local governments and the countywide historic preservation coalition to implement a facade improvement matching grant program for owners and tenants of designated historic residential and commercial buildings.

ACTION: Initiate a partnership with other preservation organizations and agencies to establish a revolving fund for the acquisition, stabilization and restoration of significant historic resources.

Cultural Landscapes

A cultural landscape is defined by the National Park Service as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." There are four types of cultural landscapes: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes. (An ethnographic landscape may contain an assemblage of natural and cultural resources that a group of people maintain a religious, artistic, aesthetic and/or cultural connection.)

For the heritage area, landscapes that retain cultural and natural elements that are significant to the four interpretive themes may include military engagement sites, sites of past encampments and fortifications, historic roads and pathways, scenic vistas/viewsheds,

structural remnants, traditional resource utilization sites, ceremonial/sacred grounds, and industrial areas. Providing actual boundaries and the resources associated with these cultural landscapes is beyond the scope of this management plan. However, it is readily apparent that the heritage area contains several significant contexts and settings that warrant further study. This should be considered an early priority for the implementation of this management plan.

Continued research can help identify and document both historic and prehistoric sites associated with the four interpretive themes. Sites can then be assessed for their significance, integrity and subsequent preservation. Because of the high degree of growth and development in the City of Niagara Falls over the past one hundred fifty years, particularly within the area closest to the Niagara Falls Reservation, only a limited number of buildings and structures have been preserved. A cultural landscape assessment approach could reveal some important findings and offer a variety of ways to commemorate and interpret several of the stories important to the heritage area that do not have tangible resources such as buildings and structures.

ACTION: Complete a cultural landscape inventory to better understand the distinct components of cultural and historic landscapes within the primary heritage area boundary and prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination, if appropriate.

Archeological Sites

Archeological resources are frequently overlooked as part of a historic preservation program. However, such sites often contain invaluable information about the use or occupation of a property, add to the historical record, and provide excellent opportunities for interpretation. This is especially true when archeological investigations are in progress. Many known archeological sites associated with the heritage area have yet to receive serious attention. Also it is likely that there are many archeological sites that have not yet been discovered or identified. Because archeological investigations tend to attract attention, the exploration and interpretation of such sites in the heritage area would significantly contribute both to the body of scientific research and the interpretive program.

There are a range of archeological resources directly relating to the heritage area that potentially deserve attention. They include encampments (both prehistoric and historic), sites of military engagements, mill sites, and previous fortifications. There is also the possibility that former farmsteads, domestic sites, taverns, and other types of eighteenth and nineteenth century sites retain archeological integrity. These sites provide important information about the behavior, culture, and life-ways of former inhabitants of the Niagara region. Also the owners of known artifact collections should be approached in a manner that will allow the documentation of provenience and diagnostic artifact types.

The identification, documentation, and preservation of potential prehistoric, eighteenth and nineteenth century archeological sites should be an important activity of heritage area partners. An archeological predictive model can be prepared that would identify areas of known and likely archeological site location for use by local government officials. Where disturbance of potential archeological sites cannot be avoided, regulatory and other programs encouraging or requiring subsurface investigation should be implemented as a part of heritage area interests.

ACTION: To identify possible locations of undocumented archeological sites, the National Heritage Area should consult with a professional archeologist to prepare an archaeological predictive model and archaeological sensitivity map for use by local governments and preservation organizations within the heritage area boundary.

ACTION: When land development is proposed in areas of high archeological site probability as identified by the archaeological predictive model and shown on the archaeological sensitivity map, an archeological survey using a subsurface sampling methodology should be conducted by a professional archeologist. A data recovery strategy should be implemented for any significant archeological deposits or features that will be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should actively solicit the assistance of individuals and organizations that possess knowledge of local prehistory and history in determining archeological site locations and cataloging private artifact collections.

ACTION: Partner with local governments and an appropriate easement receiving entity to consider implementation of a conservation easement program in the heritage area that would preserve and protect significant archeological sites and offer possible incentives and tax benefits to property owners.

5.5 Environmental Conservation in the Heritage Area

The heritage area organization should coordinate and partner with environmental conservation organizations at the local, county and regional levels. The following subsections address in detail the conservation and resource stewardship conceptual approach outlined in subsection 5.1.2. This information serves as the basis for establishing a framework for environmental conservation in the heritage area.

The parks and preserves within the primary heritage area boundary reflect the unique natural and environmental resources along the Niagara River. Improving public access and providing interpretive opportunities will help to increase awareness and appreciation of these valuable assets. The parks also offer recreational opportunities for visitors and provide a setting of natural and scenic beauty.

5.5.1 The State Environmental Quality Review Process

Although growth management and land use regulatory powers are primarily the domain of municipalities in New York, larger scale, both public and private, must address historic preservation and environmental conservation issues as part of the State Environmental Quality Review process (SEQR). The SEQR process requires that a local or state agency in charge of an approval process must take into account the impact of the proposed action on environmental factors associated with and in the vicinity of the project. The definition of 'environment' is broad and includes resources in the natural and built environment. The definition as provided in Part 617 of Title 6 of the New York Codes, Rules and Regulations reads as follows:

> …the physical conditions that will be affected by a proposed action, including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, noise, resources of

> agricultural, archeological, historic or aesthetic significance, existing patterns of population concentration, distribution or growth, existing community or neighborhood character, and human health.

If an agency makes a determination that a significant resource will be impacted by the proposed action, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared. The EIS must outline the proposed design, methods and techniques that will be used to mitigate the impact of the proposed action on the effected resource. The state process is similar to what is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for proposed actions initiated by federal agencies.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should advocate for the mitigation of significant resources when proposed projects are under SEQR review within the heritage area boundary.

5.5.2 Environmental Conservation Issues

During the planning process associated with the preparation of this management plan several significant environmental conservation issues were identified. Locating, remediation and monitoring of Brownfield and Superfund sites is still one of the leading environmental issues for the region. Also the natural resource inventory is incomplete for Erie and Niagara counties and the potential for environmental research as part of the Great Lakes Basin has not been fully realized. Niagara Falls, the river, gorge, escarpment and its associated natural resources have not been fully recognized for its national and international significance. Opportunities exist for natural resource conservation to play a stronger role in community revitalization for the City of Niagara Falls and other communities in the heritage area.

Existing environmental organizations in the region are working with the appropriate authorities to complete natural resource surveys for critical habitats and imperiled areas using criteria established by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. Universities and governmental agencies maintain detailed natural resource databases for ecosystems in the western New York region and involve student researchers in the data collection. Several non-profit environmental advocacy organizations in the vicinity have developed strong volunteer corps to generate grassroots support for environmental protection and natural resource conservation. Also several environmental agencies and organizations are directly involved with implementing specific projects that are monitoring ecosystem health and restoring natural landscapes.

The concept behind the implementation actions listed below is to allow the National Heritage Area to partner and coordinate with local and regional environmental conservation advocates. The communities located within the primary heritage area boundary strongly support environmental conservation and seek to improve the quality of life for residents by implementing project and programs that improve and enhance the natural environment in the Buffalo-Niagara region.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its partners should provide interpretation for the heritage area themes outlined in Chapter 2, Niagara's Interpretive Presentation that promote an appreciation for natural resources and create an awareness of

current environmental issues in locations where significant resources are not currently interpreted.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area shall promote the sustainable use of trails along the Niagara Gorge.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area shall promote, encourage, support, and facilitate the conservation of land for environmental protection and the designation of environmentally sensitive/ resource management areas by environmental agencies and organizations.

5.6 Preservation and Conservation Partners and Programs

The existing conditions assessment contained within the Environmental Assessment portion of the heritage area plan provides an overview of the specific organizations, programs, and planning processes related to historic preservation and environmental protection in the State of New York. On a broader scale, there are ten organizational tiers that have the potential to provide support for the preservation and conservation of significant resources in the heritage area:

1. Local nonprofit organizations comprised of grassroots advocates provide direct-benefit programs to residents and work to conserve and preserve significant resources;

2. Municipal and county governments integrate preservation and conservation goals and policies into planning documents, initiatives and regulations along with implementing associated public infrastructure projects;

3. Local and regional businesses along with national and international corporations provide the materials, labor, expertise, practical experience and sometimes funding for preservation and environmental causes;

4. Regional authorities, districts and public-private partnerships have been established with specific purposes to provide technical assistance, program implementation, and/or funding opportunities;

5. Nonprofit organizations at the regional, statewide and national level provide a comprehensive advocacy network as well as strategic educational and management programs;

6. Private foundations at the regional, statewide and national level provide direct funding to organizations with shared preservation and conservation objectives;

7. State government provides a comprehensive regulatory and program framework for regional authorities and local governments along with assistance in resource management, grant opportunities, and dedicated program funding; and

8. The federal government provides a comprehensive regulatory and program framework for state governments, technical assistance for interpretation, data collection and resource management, along with grant opportunities and dedicated program funding;

9. A bi-national network of public and private academic institutions with research and documentary capabilities is available with direct support provided by local colleges and universities; and

10. The World Heritage Center at the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is dedicated to linking and balancing the conservation of nature with the preservation of cultural properties.

Several of the other organizational tiers outlined above often play an important role in identifying and preserving cultural and natural environment resources, frequently as part of the local and state regulatory review process. Regional, state, national and international organizations play a significant role in providing vision, leadership, coordination, and incentives to encourage and support local action. Communicating and coordinating among the ten organizational tiers will be a critical task for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is well-positioned to take advantage of several grant funding opportunities. Even with recent budget cutbacks, the State of New York offers one of the most diverse state-funded grant programs in the nation. Also regional grant programs associated with power plant relicensing offer a substantial opportunity to leverage available heritage area funding. Additional information about grant funding opportunities is provided in the programs section below and in Chapter 7.

Rather than establish its own grants information clearinghouse, the heritage area organization should partner with other agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations and the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council region to create such a clearinghouse. This would avoid duplication of similar services and provide all agencies and organizations in the region with access to financial resources for projects and programs.

5.6.1 Programs in the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should consider the potential for pursuing funding, establishing partnerships and maintaining communication with the following state agencies within this Department:

Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau

The Bureau acts as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for the State of New York managing all state and federal historic preservation programs that assist communities, municipalities, and individuals in identifying, evaluating, preserving, and protecting historic, archeological and cultural resources. The SHPO administers both state and national historic preservation programs, including the New York State Register of Historic Places, the New York portion of the National Register of Historic Places, the

historic rehabilitation tax credits program, and the federal Certified Local Government program. The Bureau also provides preservation planning and environmental review services. These programs are implemented through a network of teams assigned to regions across the state.

A matching grant program to acquire, improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate or restore properties listed on the National or State Registers of Historic Places is available to municipalities or nonprofits with an ownership interest. Also the agency provides matching grants to Certified Local Governments for National Register of Historic Places nominations and updates along with other historic preservation activities including architectural and archeological surveys and inventories.

ACTION: Work closely with staff in the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau to identify and evaluate historic resources associated with the heritage area and solicit grant funds for related historic preservation projects.

Bureau of Historic Sites
Part of the Division of Historic Preservation, the Bureau of Historic Sites provides technical and program support to New York's state parks and historic sites for the protection and interpretation of significant natural, historic, and cultural properties owned and managed by the State. Using a collaborative approach, the Bureau provides technical assistance for the following topics: building and landscape preservation, historic collections conservation, curatorial services, collections management, archaeological research and preservation, interpretive program and project development, and historic property protection and security. The Bureau also assists state park Friends organizations in efforts to enhance and expand programs, properties, and collections at state historic sites and historic parks.

ACTION: Engage staff with the Bureau of Historic Sites to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the interpretation program historic preservation projects, and archeological research associated with state-owned historic and cultural properties in the heritage area.

Environmental Management Bureau
Located within the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Bureau assists in the responsible stewardship of natural resources in the state park system by protecting water and land; plants and animals; the environmental health and safety of patrons and employees; and in ensuring compliance with environmental laws and regulations. The Bureau works to balance visitor access with resource protection and cares for common and rare species, as well as natural communities in state parks.

ACTION: Consult with staff in the Environmental Management Bureau to identify common and rare animal and plant species in the heritage area for interpretive programs and to address issues of conservation and resource sustainability.

New York State Heritage Areas Program
Formerly known as the Urban Cultural Park System, the State Heritage Areas program is designed to be a partnership between state agencies and local governments and organizations

to promote special areas of significance around the state. Individual communities and corridors encompassing several communities are eligible for designation, incorporating many of the state's significant natural, historic, and cultural resources and relating to themes defined in the State Heritage Trails program. Eighteen (18) State Heritage Areas have been established to date including the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor with a boundary that encompasses all of Niagara and Erie counties. An additional heritage area has been proposed, the Underground Railroad State Heritage Area located in the City of Niagara Falls. At the time that this National Heritage Area management plan was under preparation, a planning document was underway for the Underground Railroad State Heritage Area initiative despite the fact that the New York State Heritage Areas program has been subject to recent staff reductions and budget cuts.

A matching grant program was previously available for projects to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures that are located within the boundary of a state heritage area although funding is not currently provided for this program in the budget for the State of New York. In 2007 the Heritage Development Resource Guide (http://nysparks.com/historic-preservation/documents/Heritage DevelopmentResource Guide.pdf) was prepared by the program which provides a summary of statewide organizations and agencies that are involved or may assist with the development of heritage resources.

ACTION: Coordinate and partner with the management entities for the Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridor and Underground Railroad State Heritage Area on shared preservation and conservation goals, projects and programs.

New York State Heritage Trails

This program was developed to highlight significant sites in New York that relate to four historical themes: 1) the American Revolutionary War, 2) the Underground Railroad, 3) Women's Heritage, and 4) President Theodore Roosevelt. The sites and heritage attractions associated with the four themes are featured on a state website and in trail-related promotional materials. Many of the sites also received support from the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation to allow their programs to reach a larger visitor audience.

With funds provided by the Federal Highway Administration, a matching grant program for the acquisition, development, rehabilitation and maintenance of trails and trail-related projects is available to non-profit organizations, municipal, state and federal agencies, tribal governments and other public agencies and authorities. Funded projects must be identified in, or further a specific goal of, the New York Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and must be accessible to the general public.

ACTION: Coordinate and partner with the New York State Heritage Trails program to identify, preserve and promote historic sites and heritage attractions in the heritage area that relate to the four heritage trail historic themes and seek matching grant funding for projects that meet the program's objectives.

5.6.2 Programs in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should consider the potential for pursuing funding, establishing partnerships and maintaining communication with the state agencies within the Department of Environmental Conservation as described below.

Great Lakes Protection Fund
This program provides an ongoing funding source regional and statewide research projects that will protect, restore and improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem in New York State. The program supports projects between government, academia, non-governmental and environmental groups to conduct research and exchange/apply information about remediating and sustaining the health of the plant, animal, and human elements of New York's Great Lakes ecosystem. Typical projects include collecting and analyzing environmental data; research on the economic, environmental and human health effects of environmental contamination; developing new and improved environmental cleanup technologies; research on the effectiveness of pollution-control policies; and monitoring the health of fish, wildlife, waterfowl and other organisms.

Environmental Justice Community Impact Grants
Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Environmental justice efforts focus on improving the environment in communities, specifically minority and low-income communities, and addressing disproportionate adverse environmental impacts that may exist in those communities. Funding is available for a variety of projects including community gardens and green infrastructure, air and water quality monitoring, waste recycling in public housing, lead poisoning prevention, building deconstruction and recycling, and environmental education for urban and Native American youth. Typical grants range in amounts from $5,000 to $50,000.

ACTION: Partner with environmental conservation and community groups in the heritage area that may want to offer public environmental education programs and community improvements that relate to the goals and objectives shared between the Environmental Justice Community Impact program and this management plan.

Environmental Remediation Technical Assistance Grants
This program is available to eligible community groups to increase public awareness and understanding of remedial activities taking place in their community. Eligible community groups such as nonprofit organizations may apply to receive grants for up to $50,000 per eligible site with no match requirement. Funds may be used for the purpose of obtaining independent technical assistance in interpreting existing environmental information about an eligible 'significant threat' site being remediated in the State Superfund Program or Brownfield Cleanup Program and sharing the information with the general public. An eligible community group must certify that its membership represents the interest of the community affected by the site, and that its members' health, economic well-being or enjoyment of the environment is potentially threatened by the Superfund or Brownfield site.

ACTION: Explore possibility of interpreting legacy of Superfund and Brownfield sites in the vicinity of Niagara Falls as part of National Heritage Area interpretation using available grant funding from this program.

Urban and Community Forestry Program
Available to municipalities and nonprofit organizations, this program is designed to assist municipalities with implementation of sustainable local urban forestry programs.

Grants are provided to increase tree cover on local streets and in parks; to assist in the proper care and maintenance of community trees; to conduct tree inventories and prepare management plans; and to create and distribute information on the value and benefit of urban trees.

ACTION: Partner with environmental conservation and community groups in the heritage area that may want to offer public conservation education programs and community improvements that relate to the goals and objectives shared between the Urban and Community Forestry Program and this management plan.

5.6.3 Programs in the New York Department of State

Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program

The New York State Department of State provides financial and technical assistance to municipalities and community-based (nonprofit) organizations to complete revitalization plans and implementation strategies for brownfield sites. In addition, the Department of Environmental Conservation provides technical assistance and advice to program applicants regarding site assessments on brownfield sites as part of the program. Funding is available to conduct the following: Step 1) a Pre-Nomination Study, a preliminary analysis of the area affected by brownfield sites including the potential for revitalization; Step 2) Nomination, an in-depth analysis of the site including an economic/market analysis and reuse strategy; and Step 3) Implementation Strategy, a detailed description of the techniques and actions that are necessary to implement the plan, proposed uses and improvements.

Currently the City of Niagara Falls has two Brownfield Opportunity Areas projects funded and underway. The first project is a Step 1, Pre-nomination Study for an approximate 1,100-acre area characterized with 30 to 45 brownfield sites located in the Buffalo Avenue corridor with project objectives to redevelop the corridor for new businesses, increased tourism activity, more open space, and environmental enhancement. The second project is a Step 2, Nomination Study in the Highland Community for an approximate 560-acre area characterized with 15 potential brownfield sites that the City intends to redevelop for residential and business enhancements.

ACTION: Assist the City of Niagara Falls in achieving project objectives relating to tourism objectives that tell the history of the Buffalo Avenue Corridor including public education and interpretation improvements and activities.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

For New York communities this comprehensive program is available to address the most critical issues facing the ongoing use and redevelopment of natural, public, working, or developed waterfronts. First, a planning document is locally prepared in partnership with the Division of Coastal Resources, with community consensus about the future of its waterfront. Once approved, the municipality is eligible for grant funding to implement the projects needed to achieve the vision.

The City of Niagara Falls has received a grant from this program to continue improvements to LaSalle Waterfront Park. Work items include installation of an entrance sign, park amenities, and landscaping. The Village of Youngstown has completed a Local Waterfront

Revitalization Plan and is seeking funding for a water taxi service on the Niagara River between the village's marina and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. A test run for the project was implemented during a summer weekend last year with considerable interest and ridership demonstrated.

ACTION: Assist and support municipalities located within the heritage area in designing and developing projects that will improve public access to the community's waterfronts, preserve and enhance significant resources, and provide interpretation about the natural and cultural history of the Niagara River.

5.6.4 Statewide Preservation and Conservation Organizations

The National Heritage Area should coordinate and collaborate with the following organizations.

New York Council for the Humanities

A nonprofit organization founded in 1975 to help all New Yorkers become thoughtful participants in the state's communities by promoting critical inquiry, cultural understanding, and civic engagement. The Council is the sole statewide proponent of public access to the humanities and receives Federal, State, and private funding. The grants program supports lectures, festivals, panel discussions, walking tours, and the planning and implementation of exhibitions and other ventures at small and large nonprofit institutions including museums, libraries, historical societies, and other cultural and educational organizations.

Parks and Trails New York

This is the statewide advocacy organization for parks and trails that works with community organizations and municipalities to plan, create, promote, and protect a growing network of parks and more than 1,500 miles of greenways, bike paths, and trails. The organization encourages improved maintenance and stewardship of the state park system, promotes bicycling for sustainable tourism and economic development, provides technical assistance and grants, and advocates for the creation a statewide trail network. Currently, the Parks and Trails New York non-profit organization has a contractual agreement with the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission and National Park Service to provide a part-time administrative staff position for the heritage area.

Preservation League of New York State

The league is dedicated to the protection of New York's diverse and rich heritage which includes historic buildings, districts, and landscapes. It actively encourages historic preservation by public and private organizations, agencies, and individuals in communities throughout the state. Through the Endangered Properties Intervention Program the organization directly intervenes when historic buildings are threatened with disinvestment, neglect, and demolition by facilitating the purchase and rehabilitation of threatened historic properties.

New York Cultural Heritage Tourism Network

This network is a coalition of arts, culture and heritage sites and attractions from across the state that have joined forces to increase visitation for each member and grow cultural heritage tourism for the benefit of local economies, cultural & educational institutions,

and visitors. The organization has prepared a statewide inventory of arts, culture and heritage destinations and venues numbering over 2,400 properties and is creating cultural heritage tour packages for on-line purchase.

Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force
The Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF) was created in 1992 by the Grand Council of the Iroquois League with delegates representing each of the Six Nations. The task force is assigned the responsibility of identifying environmental problems in their respective communities and providing possible solutions. Formed in 1997, the Tuscarora Environment Office provides this service for the Tuscarora Nation of New York which has several ongoing environmental programs including recycling services, environmental restoration projects, and student scholarships.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should establish a working relationship with leading statewide preservation and conservation organizations and seek technical assistance, advocacy support and funding when needed.

5.6.5 National Preservation and Conservation Organizations

Alliance of National Heritage Areas
The Alliance of National Heritage Areas (ANHA) is a membership organization comprised of the 49 National Heritage Areas created through Congressional legislation and other associated constituencies. The organization's mission is to raise public awareness about the benefits of National Heritage Areas, to form partnerships among organizations in the heritage development field, and hosts educational conferences, programs and workshops on the topic of heritage development. ANHA serves in an advocacy role for the creation of new heritage areas and for the funding of existing heritage area programs. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has recently joined the organization and its part-time administrative staff person is taking advantage of training and networking opportunities offered through ANHA.

ACTION: The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should maintain its membership with the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and actively participate in its meetings, educational programs and workshops.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation
The National Trust for Historic Preservation is the nation's leading historic preservation advocacy organization. Founded in 1949, the Trust is a private, nonprofit membership organization providing leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to assist in saving America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Staff at the Washington, DC, headquarters, six regional offices and 29 historic sites work with the Trust's 200,000 members and thousands of preservation groups in all 50 states. The recent conference in Buffalo (October 2011) was its most successful national conference ever.

ACTION: The heritage area organization should strive to maintain a connection with the National Trust through its available programs including the new National Treasures initiative to be launched in 2012.

5.7 Participation in Heritage Area Planning by Federally Recognized Tribal Nations

The National Park Service has identified twelve federally recognized tribal nations that have associations and potential interest in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. These tribal nations, and their association with the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area project, are as follows:

• The Seneca Nation of Indians	Designated seat on the Federal Commission
• The Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative
• The Tuscarora Nation	Designated seat on the Federal Commission
• Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative
• Onondaga Indian Nation (New York)	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative
• Cayuga Nation of Indians (New York)	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative
• Oneida Indian Nation (New York)	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative
• St Regis Mohawk Tribe (New York)	Consultation letter sent to tribal representative

As required by federal regulations in the Environmental Assessment portion of this planning document, input from these tribal nations was solicited during preparation of the heritage area management plan. In addition, the successful implementation of the management plan will require the Native American perspective and ongoing participation by representatives of the three tribal nations listed below.

5.7.1 The Haudenosaunee Confederacy (The Six Nations of the Iroquois)

In the eyes of the Haudenosaunee Grand Council, the governing body for the Six Nations consists of fifty hereditary sachems. The Seneca or 'Onondowahgah' (meaning "People of the Great Hill") have historically resided the furthest west in Iroquois Territory and are one of the original five nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Today, the Seneca people have the largest population among the Six Nations. Those residing in the United States are divided among the two federally recognized tribal nations described below and a third, the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma. The Tuscarora became the sixth nation of the Iroquois Confederacy in 1722 and maintain separate tribal nation status in the eyes of the United States government. Some people of Tuscaroran ancestry are said to still reside in North Carolina, their homeland at the time of European contact, but do not maintain any federally recognized tribal status. It is worthy of note that a significant number of Iroquois tribal members also reside on a reservation, the Six Nations of the Grand River, in Ontario, Canada.

The Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians
One of the original Five Nations of the Iroquois, or 'Haudenosaunee', the Seneca Indians are recognized as the "Keepers of the Western Door." During the 19th century the Tonawanda Band sought a separate identity from the other Seneca Indians in New York in order to preserve their traditional practices, including selection of their lifetime leaders by family lineage. The Tonawanda Band of Seneca Indians is a separate tribal nation recognized by the United States government. Their reservation, located on the upper reaches of Tonawanda Creek at the eastern edge of Erie and Niagara counties and western edge of Genesee County, is one of three reservations granted to the Seneca Indians by the 1784 Treaty of Fort Stanwix. It is situated several miles from the primary heritage area boundary near Akron, New York where approximately 500 tribal members live. A representative of this tribal nation has been authorized to serve on the federal commission for the heritage area, but the seat remained vacant during preparation of the management plan.

The Seneca Nation of Indians
Forming a modern form of elected government in 1848, the Seneca Nation of Indians maintains five reservations in western New York. An estimated 7,800 members of this tribal nation live on both the Cattaraugus Reservation (Erie and Cattaraugus counties) and Allegany Reservation (Cattaraugus County) which were granted to the tribe in the 1784 Treaty of Fort Stanwix. Two of the three other smaller reservations were acquired by the tribal nation for gaming operations including the Niagara Falls Territory on which the casino in the City of Niagara Falls stands. Both representatives appointed by this tribal nation passed away during preparation of the heritage area management plan and the National Park Service is waiting for additional nominations from the tribal nation.

The Tuscarora Nation of New York
The sixth member of the Iroquois Confederacy, or Haudenosaunee, this tribal nation maintains a 9.3 square mile reservation just east of the primary heritage area boundary near Lewiston, New York where 1,150 tribal members live. The reservation is in the proximity of where their ancestral village was located in the early 19th century. A representative of this tribal nation serves on the federal commission appointed for the heritage area.

5.7.2 Stewardship of Native American Resources in the Heritage Area

Appropriate stewardship of resources associated with the Native American cultural context requires further identification and research along with ongoing communication with representatives of the federally recognized tribal nations in the vicinity of the heritage area. The types of preservation and conservation activities proposed include the following:

ACTION: Conduct interviews with representatives from each federally recognized tribal nation in the vicinity of the two-county area to provide opportunity beyond this management plan to retrieve information regarding traditions, stories, resources, landscapes, and activities within and related to the heritage area that are important to each tribal nation.

ACTION: Prepare a detailed cultural context statement for each tribe that still exists or once existed in the two-county vicinity that provides a background history,

ethnographic information, biographies of past and present tribal leaders, location and names of villages, conflicts with other tribes, diagnostic artifacts, museum collections, and an annotated bibliography.

ACTION: Identify natural resources, environmental settings, ecological processes and cultural landscapes within the primary heritage area boundary that are significant to Native American tribal groups.

ACTION: Maintain an inventory and develop a predictive model for the location of prehistoric and proto-historic archeological sites associated with indigenous peoples in the two-county area and preserve unprotected archeological sites through land acquisition or conservation easement programs.

ACTION: When and where appropriate, assist Native American tribal groups in sharing and interpreting ceremonies, traditions and activities with other Niagara County residents and visitors.

Lewiston Mound JMA 2011

Chapter 6 – Community Revitalization

If the information communicated during the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2011 Annual Conference held in Buffalo is an accurate indicator, the urban areas of the Buffalo-Niagara region are soon to emerge phoenix-like from decades of decline. The synergy of the public, non-profit, academic and business sectors joining forces in shared goals is reaching a critical mass. The investment of years of planning, resource advocacy and creative thinking is starting to payoff.

However, the hard work is not over. Like Buffalo, the City of Niagara Falls has had to contend with the loss of major business and industry, environmental contamination, and depopulation. Both cities are now looking to heritage tourism as a major component of the new regional economy. The bottom line is that the urban blight in Niagara Falls is one of the major hurdles the city has to overcome in order to position itself as a tourist-friendly city. An innovative approach using the tools and best practices available for local land use controls, historic preservation, and related financial incentives is a must to spur redevelopment of and reinvestment in the city's built environment.

This chapter addresses issues of community revitalization, planning, and economic development at the local, county, and regional levels. It outlines a framework for the heritage area organization that identifies possible partners and programs. The success of the heritage area in community revitalization will rely heavily on coordination and collaboration with these partners and programs. Also it is important for the heritage area organization to advocate for an economic development approach that integrates natural and cultural resource stewardship and heritage tourism principles and values.

6.1 Vision and Goals for Community Revitalization

The Environmental Assessment prepared for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area outlines the vision, mission, and goals that were developed for the heritage area as part of the planning process that preceded the preparation of this management plan. The vision for the heritage area specifically states that efforts of the heritage area organization are to enable "growth of a sustainable regional economy…in ways that benefit and unite its people and places." This lofty vision of sustainable growth balanced with responsible resource stewardship represents a reversal of previous development trends in Niagara County.

Nine goals were identified and adopted for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area addressing various areas of interest and potential action outlined in this management plan. Two of these goals address community revitalization and economic development:

> **Sense of Place, Sense of Community** – Maintain and improve the sense of place and community in the Niagara region by assisting in the recognition and restoration of significant resources and landscapes and supporting their preservation, conservation and enhancement.

Economic Revitalization – Foster economic revitalization in the region by advocating the principles and best practices of heritage tourism.

The following approaches relating to community revitalization were identified for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area as part of discussions with several special interest focus groups in a workshop setting and individual interviews. The information was then presented to the NFNHA Federal Commission for their consideration. During preparation of the management plan these ideas help to further define strategies and objectives. The subsections below are organized under separate Sense of Place, Sense of Community and Economic Revitalization headings whereas strategies for both are combined later in this chapter.

6.1.1 Approach for Sense of Place, Sense of Community

In the Preferred Alternative adopted by the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission the following objectives were outlined in developing an approach for the goal entitled "Sense of Place, Sense of Community":

- Assist in the recognition, restoration and enhancement of resources and landscapes.
- Support communities in using the Niagara River corridor to promote a regional sense of place.
- Integrate NFNHA Commission goals with the Niagara River Greenway Plan, City of Niagara Falls Comprehensive Plan, planning documents of the Tribal Nations, and plans of the Village of Lewiston, Town of Lewiston, Village of Youngstown, and Town of Porter, along with other planning initiatives along the Niagara River corridor.
- Develop and assist heritage area communities and program partners in developing specific projects and events that create an unusual or unique sense of place along the Niagara River corridor.
- Place interpretive exhibits at regional transportation terminals such as the train station and airport to promote the heritage area.

6.1.2 Approach for Economic Revitalization

The following objectives were outlined in developing an approach for the goal entitled "Economic Revitalization":

- Coordinate with and support local organizations in economic development initiatives focused on heritage tourism.
- Participate in a "Buy Local" initiative that encourages consumers to purchase locally made goods and services.
- Facilitate and promote locally made food products, arts, and crafts as part of the heritage tourism economy.
- Through partnerships, train local residents in skills and trades necessary to provide the goods and services associated with a strong heritage tourism economy.

- Working with local partners, implement an aggressive small business development program in commercial areas focused on providing high quality services to visitors and residents, with special attention to arts initiatives.
- Through partnerships, integrate interpretive programming into commercial districts serving both visitors and residents.
- Create a heritage tourism institute for the benefit of local residents in learning about local history, the natural environment, and heritage tourism.

In implementing these approaches the heritage area organization will assist its partners in developing and implementing projects and programs that contribute to economic revitalization of its communities using accepted best practices for preservation, conservation, and stewardship of significant cultural and natural resources in the heritage area and the region as a whole.

6.2 Community Revitalization at the Regional Level

Current fundamental changes in the global economy require that individual communities in metropolitan areas join forces in developing cohesive concentrations of industries, infrastructure, markets, and skilled workforce that work regionally and collectively in a connected physical and virtual landscape. In the "New Economy," where city, county, state, and even national boundaries are diminished or irrelevant in the global marketplace, the statement 'united we stand' takes on a new and urgent meaning. American rustbelt cities, even though deteriorated and depopulated after years of decline, suddenly find that they have the proper density, infrastructure, and fabric to position themselves as competitive global communities. Communities with these physical assets, however, may still cling to yesterday's ideas or inter-community grudges that will inevitably guarantee their continued decline. During the planning process in the development of this management plan it was readily apparent that the members of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission support the concept of regionalism. The coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area must maintain this perspective as it moves forward in implementing the management plan.

6.2.1 Regional Positioning

Globalization has forced the reconfiguration of communities, conferring value on the innovative, distinctive assets that have been historically formed and refined locally. Progress in technological development of transportation and communications over the past decades, particularly with changes in financing, outsourcing, and logistics, has greatly diluted competitive advantage for traditional industry in individual communities. Instead, larger metropolitan economies are competing globally in specialized sectors and fields tailored to their regional "clusters" (groupings of industries whose workforce, experience, and ideas flow among businesses and support formation of new businesses).

In the report *Metropolicy: Shaping a New Federal Partnership for a Metropolitan Nation* published by The Brookings Institution, this trend in clustering is further described:

> More and more developed nations are becoming defined and fueled by their local, metropolitan economies. Before, analysis focused on what happens inside companies, how inputs of labor and capital are used

for productivity of output. Now, what happens outside companies in the immediate business environment is just as important. With global competition in innovation of processes and products, the clustering of knowledge in the research community, consulting firms, skilled laborers, financial institutions, legal services, government entities, and specialized technology industries have become vitally important. Such agglomeration and diversity, unique to a metro area, catalyzes growth. Additionally, auxiliary industries in local services and trades evolve in such metropolitan areas, such as the production of wind turbines in the automotive industry of the greater Detroit and Cleveland areas. Cultural ambience even emerges with the area's quality of place and historical heritage in the form of the arts (art galleries, music halls, publishing houses), non-profit venues (museums, performing arts theaters), and public assets (libraries, parks). Consequently, this new configuration of metropolitan economies requires equally new and adaptive government policymaking.

The heritage area organization must maintain a regional perspective while taking action locally. Strong partnerships with academia, tourism interests, the creative industries, "green" businesses, and other preservation and conservation organizations should be forged by the heritage area. This alliance then needs to promote a preservation and conservation agenda as a major component of community revitalization with local and regional economic development entities. Successful community revitalization creates a high quality of life standard for residents, provides a pleasurable experiential environment for visitors, and serves to draw the workforce needed for the Creative Economy.

What is the Creative Economy?

At the heart of the Creative Economy is the concept that "human creativity is the ultimate economic resource" and that the industries of the 21st century will depend "increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation." A definition for the Creative Economy has been adopted by the United Nations and features the following principles:

- *Foster income-generation, job creation and export earnings while promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development;*
- *Embrace economic, cultural and social aspects interacting with technology, intellectual property and tourism objectives;*
- *Advance knowledge-based economic activities with a development dimension and support linkages at macro and micro levels to the overall global economy; and*
- *Support feasible development options calling for innovative, multidisciplinary policy responses and intergovernmental action.*
- *The Creative Economy comprises eleven "Creative Industries" which include "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property." The eleven creative industries are:*

Advertising
Architecture
Designer fashion
Film, video and photography
Industrial design
Skilled trades
Software and computer game
Music, visual and performing arts
Publishing
Television and radio
Arts and antique markets
development

ACTION: The countywide coalition of historic preservation organizations outlined in Chapter 5, Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship, must forge an alliance with academic, tourism, business and conservation organizations to develop and promote a comprehensive preservation and conservation strategy with local and regional economic development interests.

The Great Lakes Megalopolis

6.2.2 The Great Lakes Megalopolis

The Buffalo-Niagara Metropolitan Area is considered part of the Great Lakes Megalopolis, one of the world's largest economies incorporating 28 population centers in the United States and Canada that surround the five Great Lakes. This megalopolis encompasses the Great Lakes watershed with a total estimated population of 59 million people, including the globally competitive cities of Chicago and Toronto. It extends from St. Louis and Minneapolis on the west to Pittsburgh and Montreal on the east. It contains one-fifth of the world's surface fresh water and a combined shoreline of 10,210 miles along which an estimated 200 million tons of cargo are shipped annually.

There are many features and resources that communities within this mega-region share including similarities in climate, plant communities, wildlife, natural resources, history, cultural composition, transportation networks, and economy. It is also worthy of note that freshwater from four of the five Great Lakes passes through the Niagara region on its way to the Atlantic Ocean. These intra-region relationships should not only be acknowledged, but leveraged for maximum resource utilization efficiency and economic benefit for all of its communities. The mindset needs to be 'what happens in Sheboygan eventually finds its way to Niagara Falls' with the same attitude for an "upstream" trajectory as well.

ACTION: The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and its partners should consider the Great Lakes Megalopolis super-region as a primary target market for tourism and should provide an interpretive context that recognizes the shared macro-historical context, climate, environment, ethnic groups, and cultural traditions.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area recognizes that all communities located in the Great Lakes Megalopolis super-region hold in common certain natural resources and will participate in the sustainable consumption and conservation of these resources as a means of community revitalization.

Canada's Golden Horseshoe

6.2.3 The Toronto Metropolitan Area

Toronto is at the center of the largest metropolitan area in Canada and is the eleventh largest in North America at 5.5 million people. By comparison, the Buffalo-Niagara Falls metropolitan area (Erie and Niagara counties) ranks 59th in North America with 1.1 million people and is the second largest metropolitan area in New York State (2010 census). Also the Toronto Metropolitan Economy generates one-fifth of Canada's gross domestic product, and is home to almost 40% of the headquarters for Canadian companies.

An extension of the Greater Toronto Area's economic sphere of influence that surrounds the western end of Lake Ontario up to Niagara Falls, Ontario is referred to by some economists and business executives as Canada's "Golden Horseshoe." This larger region represents a Canadian economic powerhouse which is highly integrated in terms of industry, trade, agriculture, and transportation networks. With a population of 8 million, the Golden Horseshoe is the sixth most populous urbanized area in North America, just behind the Baltimore-Washington-Northern Virginia Combined Statistical Area and is projected to grow to almost 12 million people by 2030.

Although not mandated by the federal enabling legislation that created the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, it is in the best interest of the heritage area organization and its partners to reach across the river to coordinate and collaborate with Canadian interests. The Buffalo-Niagara region should take better advantage of its proximity to the Toronto Metropolitan Area and further integrate economically into Canada's "Golden Horseshoe."

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should coordinate and collaborate on interpretive programming with Canadian heritage tourism organizations and attractions establishing relationships with thematically related sites in Ontario, Canada.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its associated communities should partner with Canadian municipalities on the opposite bank of the Niagara River and the Fort George National Historic Site to stage an annual "Falls to the Forts" special event with shared programs, activities and promotions.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its associated communities should explore a "joint residency" program with Canadian municipalities on the opposite bank of the Niagara River to encourage increased interaction among residents in these international communities.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its tourism partners should establish a detailed understanding of which interpretive stories in the heritage area appeal to Canadian visitors and develop a specific visitor experience customized for this market along with a marketing strategy.

6.2.4 Western New York Regional Economic Development Council

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's administration has created the Regional Economic Development Council program to foster regional public-private partnerships for economic development. The councils are composed of local experts and stakeholders from business, academia, local government, and non-governmental organizations who are charged with the preparation of a strategic plan. The program allows for streamlined state grant funding from multiple agencies for certain projects.

Erie and Niagara counties along with three other adjacent counties comprise the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC), one of ten Regional Economic Development Councils in the State of New York charged with the preparation of a regional strategic plan for economic development. Among the goals stated in the WNYREDC plan is to develop high-quality tourism product for visitors. The Niagara

Experience Center described in this management plan is showcased as a project in the strategic plan. Specific goals and actions from the plan are outlined below.

Visitor spending in the Western New York region exceeded $2.2 billion in 2009 – $1.3 billion in Erie County and $450 million in Niagara County.

Objectives for tourism outlined in the WNYREDC strategic plan include the following:

- **Improve visitor "gateway" experience/physical sense of entry to the Nation/ State/Region** – The WNYREDC strategic plan proposes to develop design standards for several gateways into the country, state and region. Proposed locations include the NYS Thruway, the international bridges along the Niagara River, the Pennsylvania state border, and airports. A 1-800 number and website reference featured on the "welcome" signage would direct visitors to a centralized tourism information clearinghouse for the region. An example of a gateway project is the Ripley Gateway in Chautauqua County which will also provide traveler services.

- **Establish a regional wayfinding sign system –** The WNYREDC proposes to create a working committee comprised of federal, state and local agency representatives that would be responsible for developing a demonstration project for a regional wayfinding sign system. Cultural, natural, recreational, and other tourism-related destinations and attractions would be featured. Objectives for the committee would be to provide effective directional information; clearly mark the names and highway numbers of major roads and streets; promote an aesthetic and unique image for the region; and meet current standards for wayfinding signage. Standards derived from the demonstration project would be standardized and made available to state, county and local agencies for use throughout the region. The committee could also facilitate a regional funding program to incrementally install the standardized signs throughout the region.

- **Create a concession arrangement to create new/enhanced Niagara Falls State Park attractions –** The WNYREDC proposes to work with New York State Parks on enhancing the visitor experience in Niagara Falls State Park. Objectives of the initiative would result in increased length of stay, more return visits, better utilization of existing park assets, and engaging more young people.

- **Support tourism asset development** – The WNYREDC plan outlines a proposal to create a Tourism Product Development Fund specifically earmarked for bricks-and-mortar tourism projects that could demonstrate significant increases in visitation.

Specific actions for tourism promotion outlined in the WNYREDC strategic plan include:

- Develop a centralized process and tools to share and direct information for use by all western New York destination marketing organizations.

- Cross-promote and collaborate through a digital marketing strategy to increase both tourism and business marketing attraction.

- Develop appropriate messages for different sectors, acknowledging the unique audiences and needs for each industry.
- Understand the layering of brand; reflect authenticity of the region.
- Conduct a brand assessment to determine attitudes and knowledge about western New York as a destination and business community.
- Target international markets in implementation, particularly the Canadian market, as well as regional communities to help define tourism as an industry locally.

One of the top priorities for the WNYEDC is the creation of a Hospitality and Tourism Center in Niagara Falls. The renovation of the former Rainbow Center is proposed and will include eight teaching kitchens and classrooms, a student restaurant, culinary theatre, Barnes and Noble college bookstore and retail center, bakery, deli, wine boutique and exhibition space. It will also include a small business development center to help support entrepreneurism in the hospitality and leisure industry with the Niagara County Community College providing training for students.

The new Regional Economic Development Councils established by the State of New York will play a substantial role in how state and federal funds are invested in communities for several years to come. The heritage area and its partners, including Preservation Buffalo Niagara and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, can support economic development objectives by joining with progressive communities in the region, preservation and conservation interests, and the tourism industry in clearly communicating strategy, needs, and the benefits of community revitalization. Also the heritage area organization should demonstrate how best practices and recent innovations in the preservation of cultural resources, conservation of environmental resources, and related stewardship strategies strengthen community revitalization and the economic position of communities in the region.

6.2.5 USA Niagara Development Corporation

The Empire State Development Corporation (ESD) was established in 1995 as an effort to reduce the size of government and improve efficiency in the delivery of economic incentives. The functions of two state agencies were consolidated along with other State economic development entities to create jobs and prosperous communities. The organization maintains main offices in Albany, Buffalo and New York City and is supported by a network of ten regional offices throughout the state including its subsidiary, USA Niagara Development Corporation, formed in 2001 to focus on reversing the decades-long decline in downtown Niagara Falls.

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area falls within the Western New York region consisting of the five westernmost counties in New York including Erie and Niagara. A board of advisors from the public and private sectors has been appointed to serve on the Western New York Economic Development Council (WNYEDC) providing focus, direction, and priorities for the regional program. New programs available statewide include the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, the Excelsior Jobs Program and the New Market Tax Credits Program. Although not traditionally a preservation and conservation entity, the new attitudes and awareness of the benefits of heritage tourism

along with the preservation and protection of cultural resources and assets is an emerging priority for the political and private sector leadership in the region.

From a regional perspective, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will serve in a leadership role for activities relating to interpretation, heritage tourism, and historic preservation. The interpretive program will embrace a regional perspective that will help strengthen community interaction and cooperation. Also the interpretive program for the heritage area will attract visitors which will enhance the economy in participating communities.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its partners should participate in a regional working group for community revitalization, heritage tourism and historic preservation that will assist the WNYREDC and USA Niagara Development Corporation in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in its strategic plan.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area and its partners should provide regional leadership by setting the standard for quality in tourism product development that encourages community revitalization and enhancing the region's attraction.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Preservation Buffalo-Niagara and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to implement shared community revitalization objectives and collaborate on related programming.

6.3 Community Revitalization within the Heritage Area

To accomplish the goals outlined in section 6.1 above, the heritage area organization will assist its partners in developing and implementing projects and programs that contribute to the revitalization of communities in the heritage area and the region as a whole. Inherent in this effort is the understanding that the special sense of place for each community in the heritage area must not only be preserved, but substantially enhanced. It is also important to identify and develop a community's function, role, and contribution in the context of the larger region. In this period of governmental austerity it is important now more than ever to collaborate with both public and private partners to establish programs, incentives and standards that will improve the quality of life for the region's residents.

6.3.1 Community Revitalization Objectives

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area has adopted the following objectives with respect to community revitalization:

- Collaborate with national, state, regional, and local organizations in implementing regional strategies for economic development, environmental stewardship, and enhancement of quality of life.
- Craft heritage area programs so they support local community revitalization goals.
- Both regionally and locally, play a leadership role in activities related to interpretation, heritage tourism, and historic preservation.

For communities within the primary heritage area boundary, the heritage area organization will implement programs that encourage visitation. By focusing on the visitor experience in the historic commercial districts of Youngstown, Lewiston, and Niagara Falls, heritage area programs will directly support small business development and the enhancement of community character. Programs and projects will also be customized to the revitalization goals and strategies of each community.

6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities

Heritage area programming in the areas of interpretation, heritage tourism, and historic preservation will combine to support community revitalization in accordance with each community's interests, needs, and goals. The heritage area will support each of its local community partners as outlined below.

Village of Youngstown

The Village of Youngstown is the smallest community in the heritage area with limited government capabilities, but an impressive cadre of volunteers. The community's layout consists of a charming village center surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Close proximity of the village center to the Niagara River and Fort Niagara State Park allows for easy access and interaction by visitors. A lack of resident population density limits development of community-oriented businesses, but there is opportunity for the growth of tourism oriented businesses if visitation increases and stabilizes. Recent and proposed waterfront improvements outlined in the village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, create an opportunity for river traffic interaction with Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario via a proposed water taxi as long as concerns and issues expressed by the United States Department of Homeland Security are addressed.

In interviews with village leaders, businesspersons, and residents support of the heritage area seemed strong. A desire exists to preserve and enhance existing village character through small-scale projects with several improvements either recently implemented or proposed. It is apparent that residents feel the quality of life standard in Youngstown is high. Discouraging large scale development and protecting community amenities and resources were communicated as community objectives. At the same time, increasing visitor access to and awareness of the village center and providing community-compatible lodging opportunities for overnight stays were expressed as needs for community revitalization.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should assist the Village of Youngstown with the following tasks as part of its interpretive program:

1. **A major landscape interpretive exhibit on the Battle of Belle-Famille at an appropriate location in Youngstown;**

2. **A series of landscape exhibits, heritage area publications, online media, and the Junior Rangers program that tell the story of Youngstown; and**

3. **Strengthen physical and interpretive connections to Old Fort Niagara through trails, wayfinding, and wayside exhibits.**

ACTION: The village center and Old Fort Niagara are proposed to be stations along the proposed National Heritage Area transportation network which should include the proposed Niagara River water taxi between the Village of Youngstown and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in Youngstown that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the Village and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Youngstown community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with the Village of Youngstown to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in the downtown area.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area in partnership with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should consider involving Youngstown residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.

Town of Porter

The Town of Porter was created in 1812 and is named after Augustus Porter, one of the early prominent families on the Niagara Frontier. The portion of the Town of Porter west of the Robert Moses Parkway is located within the heritage area boundary. The Town surrounds the Village of Youngstown and also includes the hamlet of Ransomville located to the east of the heritage area boundary. The Town offices are located in Towers Corners just outside of the heritage area boundary and include the offices of the Clerk, Assessor, Supervisor and Justice as well as meeting space for the town's committees. The Town of Porter Historical Society operates the town's historical museum with extensive local collections and public programs in the historic Old Red Schoolhouse in Youngstown. Land uses within the Town of Porter, but outside of the Village of Youngstown that are located within the heritage area boundary include residential areas (including larger estate size lots that front on the Niagara River), farmland and undeveloped open space. Old Fort Niagara is located in the Town of Porter just north of the Youngstown village limits. A lack of resident population density limits development of community-oriented businesses.

In interviews with town leaders and residents, support of the heritage area seemed strong. A desire exists to preserve and enhance existing rural town character. Like others lower river communities, it is apparent that residents feel the quality of life standard in the Town of Porter is high. Discouraging large scale development and protecting community character were communicated as shared objectives.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Town of Porter on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events within the heritage area boundary including the Town's historical museum.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will coordinate with community leaders to provide information and updates about heritage area programs, projects and initiatives.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider developing partnerships with organizations that own and operate thematically related sites and attractions located outside of the heritage area boundary, but within the limits of the Town of Porter.

Village of Lewiston

The Village of Lewiston is strategically located between the Village of Youngstown and City of Niagara Falls at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment. It is a larger community than Youngstown with a few more governmental capabilities and an engaged, active volunteer core of residents and civic organizations. Lewiston maintains some of the same village-like character as Youngstown and has a primary commercial district along Center Street that currently contains high-end businesses and services for both visitors and residents. The village center is surrounded by affluent and appealing residential neighborhoods and is in close proximity to Artpark at Earl W. Brydges State Park allowing easy access and interaction for visitors. Recent and proposed waterfront improvements create an opportunity for river traffic interaction. There are a few underutilized properties in community and the beginnings of a suburban style commercial strip.

In interviews with village leaders, businesspersons, and residents support of the heritage area also seemed strong. A desire exists to preserve and enhance existing village character through a list of proposed improvement projects. Like Youngstown, it is apparent that residents feel the quality of life standard in Lewiston is high. Although the character and street life along Center Street is very good and businesses are currently viable, increasing visitor access to and awareness of the commercial district to help support and maintain local businesses is a high priority. Discouraging large scale development and protecting community amenities and resources were communicated as community objectives. The Village is also currently working to promote interaction between Artpark and Center Street commercial district. Increasing visitor access to and use of the Lewiston waterfront as a focal point of the community and providing community-compatible lodging opportunities for overnight stays were expressed as needs for revitalization.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should assist the Village of Lewiston with the following tasks as part of its interpretive program:

1. **Creating and installing exhibits on the Native American, African American, falls portage, and Niagara Escarpment stories;**

2. **A series of landscape exhibits, heritage area publications, online media, and aspects of the Junior Rangers program that tell the story of the Village of Lewiston; and**

3. **Creating and installing a comprehensive set of landscape exhibits at the Lewiston Landing waterfront interpreting community history, the**

Borderland **theme, and programmatic connections between Lewiston as part of the Falls-to-the-Fort storyline.**

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will assist in supporting and enhancing programs and events led by the Village and local community organizations such as the Lewiston Council on the Arts and the Historical Association of Lewiston.

ACTION: Downtown Lewiston and Artpark are proposed to be stations along the proposed heritage area transportation network.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in the Village of Lewiston that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the Village and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Lewiston community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should partner with the Village to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in the downtown area.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area in partnership with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should consider involving Lewiston residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.

Town of Lewiston

The portion of the Town of Lewiston west of the Robert Moses Parkway is located within the heritage area boundary. The Town surrounds and includes the Village of Lewiston. The Town Hall is located west of the Village of Lewiston on Ridge Road and includes the offices of the Clerk, Assessor, Supervisor, Justice, and Police Department as well as meeting space for the town's committees. Land uses within the Town of Lewiston, but outside of the Village of Lewiston that are located within the heritage area boundary include residential areas (including subdivisions and larger estate size lots that front on the Niagara River), farmland and undeveloped open space. Joseph Davis State Park is located in the Town of Lewiston to the north of the Village of Lewiston. Earl W. Brydges State Park (Artpark) is located to the south of the village on the Niagara Escarpment.

The town leaders and residents seem supportive of the heritage area. There are some interests that seek to further intensify development of the town while others seem to promote a slow or no growth agenda. Like others lower river communities, it is apparent that residents feel the quality of life standard in the Town of Lewiston is high.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Town of Lewiston on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events within the heritage area boundary.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will coordinate with community leaders to provide information and updates about heritage area programs, projects and initiatives.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will collaborate with the Town of Lewiston's efforts to partner with New York State Parks in further developing Joseph Davis State Park as an environmental learning center.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider developing partnerships with organizations that own and operate thematically related sites and attractions located outside of the heritage area boundary, but within the limits of the Town of Lewiston.

City of Niagara Falls

The City of Niagara Falls serves as the anchor community for the heritage area in terms of population, public facilities, community-based services and visitor amenities. Downtown Niagara Falls is in the immediate vicinity of a world-class visitor destination. The community also has nationally significant heritage resources and stories of international importance to tell.

On the other hand, the city suffers from high unemployment, loss of industry, urban blight and extensive Brownfield and Superfund site remediation issues. The historic city center nearest Niagara Falls State Park was demolished as part of urban renewal and has struggled to regain vitality. The city has the infrastructure and building stock for a community three times larger than its current population.

It is readily apparent that the current city leadership is committed to community revitalization and economic restructuring. The City has adopted a strategic plan for revitalization which is being incrementally and steadily implemented with tangible results. The city government is skilled at pursuing grants to fund improvement projects.

The City is seeking support and assistance from local, regional and national entities to support the creation of a world class visitor experience which will encourage visitors to extend their stay and explore the entire heritage area. Goals and objectives outlined in the city's comprehensive plan and strategic planning documents endeavor to create high quality interpretive exhibits, programming and visitor services. Local government, in partnership with a citywide network of organizations, is actively promoting historic preservation in residential neighborhoods and commercial areas and will implement a series of programs to engage the community's young people.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should support the design and construction of the Niagara Experience Center as an interpretive center introducing visitors to the heritage area experience and serving as a transportation hub.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider assisting the City of Niagara Falls with the following tasks as part of its interpretive program:

1. **Installing high quality interpretive exhibits and public art in the downtown area, in particular in the vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard, presenting the heritage area theme *Tourism and Recreation* thereby enhancing the streetscape;**

2. **Engaging visitors at the site of the former Hydraulic Canal, Schoellkopf Power Station, and Aluminum Company of America plant on the edge of the Niagara Gorge to interpret the heritage area theme *Power and Industry*;**

3. **Developing plans for an extensive, world class landscape installation, such as a Power and Industry Plaza, as part of the city's newly envisioned Cultural District; and**

4. **Developing a phased interpretation plan for the Buffalo Avenue industrial corridor to interpret the heritage area theme *Power and Industry*.**

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in the City of Niagara Falls that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the City and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Niagara Falls community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should partner with the City of Niagara Falls to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in commercial districts.

ACTION: ACTION: The National Heritage Area in partnership with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should consider involving Niagara Falls residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area will coordinate and collaborate with the Underground Railroad State Heritage Area in achieving community revitalization goals and objectives featured in both management plans.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should assist the LaSalle neighborhood in interpreting the Love Canal story and its significance to the national environmental movement.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area in partnership with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. should assist neighborhood associations in preparing histories, advocating resource stewardship, and implementing historic preservation programs.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area in partnership with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. should assist in providing design consultation and technical assistance to owners of significant historic properties and should consider providing historic preservation training and certification for local trade workers and contractors.

6.3.3 The National Trust's Main Street Program

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is a highly successful, community-driven, methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts. It uses an incremental strategy to address the issues and problems that such business districts typically face. The Main Street approach encourages economic development within the context of historic preservation using sound business practices. This approach also embraces a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets. These assets frequently include distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, local ownership, and a sense of community pride.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is not a "quick-fix" solution. Expensive infrastructure improvements such as streetscape projects, pedestrian malls, casinos and sport arenas,

The National Trust's Eight Guiding Principles for Main Streets

The Eight Guiding Principles, as explained by the National Trust's Main Street Center, has assisted many communities in reviving their commercial districts. As communicated on the National Main Street Center's website (www.mainstreet.org) the eight principles are:

1. *Comprehensive: No single focus – lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events – can revitalize Main Street. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street's Four Points, is essential.*
2. *Incremental: Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that "new things are happening" in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Main Street district grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area.*
3. *Self-help: No one else will save your Main Street. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they'll reap by investing time and money in Main Street – the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.*
4. *Partnerships: Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.*
5. *Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets: Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.*
6. *Quality: Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process – from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and "cut and paste" efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.*
7. *Change: Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on Main Street will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Main Street can really turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite – public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.*
8. *Implementation: To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization activity creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation.*

often do not generate the desired economic results because they fail to address the underlying causes of commercial district decline. The approach outlines a revitalization strategy that focuses on four key factors for success: Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion, and Organization. These factors are combined to address most of the needs of the typical commercial district. This methodology, along with the Eight Guiding Principles (see sidebar), makes it an effective tool for community-based, grassroots revitalization efforts. The program has demonstrated considerable reinvestment and revitalization in communities of all sizes and in both rural and urban contexts.

In New York State the Western Erie Canal Main Street Program (WECMSP) has been established to revitalize traditional commercial districts within the Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridor. In March 2006, the Western Erie Canal Alliance was formed as a non-profit corporation to implement the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Management Plan. The National Trust's Main Street Center, was hired by the alliance to assist with implementing the regional program. The Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council also assisted by providing a Regional Program Coordinator who provided program oversight and technical assistance. In its inaugural year (2008), three communities were selected: the Village of Albion in Orleans County, the Village of Lyons in Wayne County, and the City of Lockport in Niagara County.

ACTION: The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with local governments within the heritage area to approach the National Trust's Main Street Center to create a revitalization program for commercial districts using the Main Street approach.

Center Street in the Village of Lewiston

Chapter 7 – Management, Implementation & Business Plan

This entire management plan addresses both the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area as a whole and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission. This particular chapter, however, is organized largely to act as a business plan for the Commission. It addresses how the Commission is to be structured, how it is to engage in partnerships – framing most of its programs around the concept of "partner development"– how it is to communicate with the public and do its part in raising the funds necessary to implement this plan, and how it is to organize its operations.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of how the Commission expects to measure and evaluate its work, that is, to understand its progress toward the promise of this plan and how well it has managed its funds in the public interest. The Commission is the "keeper of the flame," the organization that communicates the vision for the heritage area. It must monitor implementation of this plan, which is designed to help the region achieve that vision, and organize adjustments as circumstances and opportunities suggest.

7.1 Background

This chapter must observe a number of conditions set in previous planning, the details of which appear in sidebars in the next several pages (Primary Goal Addressed, Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative, and Statement of Mission and Values). First and foremost, the heritage area's federal legislation lays out the requirements for the management plan (see Appendix A and further discussion in Chapter 1, *Concept & Approach*). The Commission has defined a vision and goals based on that legislation – derived from one of the Commission's earliest discussions and provided for public review and comment early on – and these have set general direction and intent for this plan. The vision and goals then guided the development of alternatives, or scenarios, for how the vision might unfold over the years given desired results and various options for programs and emphasis (all scenarios could meet the test of the legislation). Ultimately, after public review, the Commission chose a Preferred Alternative. This management plan as a whole is the detailed understanding of how to implement the Preferred Alternative.

A critical point for this chapter that underpinned the entire discussion of alternatives was the role of the Commission: how much to be a "player," that is, an entity that undertakes work of its own? Versus, how much to be a "coach," that is, how much to work through and for partners, enabling their growth and ability to develop and support the heritage area? This is answered in the preceding chapters' discussion of programs and actions. This chapter points the way toward organizing to make such programs a reality.

Primary Goal Addressed in Chapter 7

Heritage Area Management and Regional Positioning *- Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.*

Conceptual Approach from the Preferred Alternative

- *Provide a **forum to support heritage tourism collaboration**, maintaining the vision and articulating goals.*
- *The heritage area organization will play a lead or partnering role**, filling critical gaps in creating high quality interpretation and visitor experience** in such areas as hospitality programs and training, wayfinding, and visitor information and services. The organization will **play a coordinating, facilitating, and supporting role in economic development, community enhancement, and environmental quality**.*

7.2 Role of the Commission

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission communicates the management plan's vision and provides a forum for key players affecting heritage development in the region. It provides leadership and seeks success through strong communications, visible, well-designed programs, empowerment of partners, and articulation of high standards for the visitor experience. It spends federal funds – including but not limited to sharing those funds with partners through matching grants – and raises other funds to implement the management plan.

The Commission is not, in and of itself, the heritage area – the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is a collective effort, involving organizations and agencies represented on the Commission and others with a stake in the success of the heritage area (see sidebar, "What is a Heritage Area?").

7.2.1 A Business Plan for the Commission

A business plan describes the role and functions of the enterprise (the Commission); describes its operation and functions in terms of products, services, and customer benefits; analyzes customer needs and how to market its services to customers; lays out strategies and a plan for implementing them; addresses the financing of the business; and states how the business will evaluate its progress. Those are business terms that need some translation to nonprofit and quasi-governmental organizations and to the "business" of a heritage area.

This section addresses the role and functions of the enterprise, the Commission. Its products, services, and customer benefits involve interpretation, heritage tourism and the visitor experience, community engagement, community revitalization, and conservation, preservation, and stewardship. In each of these topics, there are varied audiences – that is, the Commission serves three different kinds of customers, and many of them. They are residents, visitors, and organizational/ institutional partners – nonprofit organizations and government agencies. "Customers" will "consume" interpretive and visitor experiences, or will benefit from programs that are offered through the heritage area and its partners. Considerations in each of these topics are addressed in-depth in Chapters 2 through 6, covering products, services, customer benefits, customer needs, and how to reach customers (audiences).

Statement of Mission and Values

The work of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is to enhance public appreciation for the communities, significant historic and natural resources, and landscapes of the Niagara region. The National Heritage Area works through a network of heritage area partners who seek to make interpretive, environmental, economic, and social improvements that benefit residents and visitors alike. Where initiative is lacking, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission will take action to fill the gap. In pursuing this mission, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area encourages historic preservation, recreational access, and environmental recovery. We value authenticity, cultural diversity, high-quality design, energy efficiency, regional and cross-border leadership, open communication, and transparent operations.

Given the great variety of work that this enterprise, the Commission, is to undertake, it is important to focus closely on how to manage it effectively, how to focus its actions strategically, and how to evaluate progress. Later sections in this chapter address these areas of the Commission's business planning.

A unique feature of a heritage area's managing entity's business plan is the emphasis on partnership. While the Commission will provide leadership for many initiatives as described in this plan, it is just as likely, if not more so, to focus on accomplishing its objectives hand-in-hand with partners. Much of this chapter focuses on key relationships with partnering enterprises and

their respective roles, plus ways to build the capacity of partners through programs designed by the Commission together with its partners.

7.2.2 Managing the Commission Effectively

The Commission's programs, projects, and routine operations implement the management plan. The Commission's meetings should not focus on the details of these, however. Rather, they should be the place where Commissioners step back from day-to-day concerns and details to ask, "How is the management plan being implemented and what is our progress on our vision?" and, "How and how well is the heritage area obtaining the resources for implementation?"

Too many nonprofit executive bodies get caught up in the details and spend too much time on items of little consequence to the big picture – sometimes simply because such topics are what individuals serving on these bodies understand best. It takes the collective work and determination of the entire body to maintain the "10,000-foot viewpoint" and stay out of "the weeds."

Statement of Vision

The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is an internationally recognized biosphere, cultural icon, and renowned destination of historical significance. It enables the growth of a sustainable regional economy and the conservation of its natural and cultural resources in ways that benefit and unite its people and places. Its natural splendor and meaningful heritage are shared with millions of delighted visitors and celebrated by its residents so that its environment and communities are thriving.

P.L. 110-229, Section 472, Establishing the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within the Department of the Interior the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—The commission shall be composed of 17 members, of whom [emphasis added]—

(1) 1 member shall be the Director of the National Park Service (or a designee);

(2) 5 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Governor, from among individuals with knowledge and experience of—

(A) the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Niagara River Greenway Commission, the New York Power Authority, the USA Niagara Development Corporation, and the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation; or

(B) any successors of the agencies described in subparagraph (A);

(3) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of Niagara Falls, New York;

(4) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Youngstown, New York;

(5) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the mayor of the village of Lewiston, New York;

(6) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Tuscarora Nation;

(7) 1 member shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Seneca Nation of Indians; and

(8) 6 members shall be individuals who have an interest in, support for, and expertise appropriate to tourism, regional planning, history and historic preservation, cultural or natural resource management, conservation, recreation, and education, or museum services, of whom—

(A) 4 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the 2 members of the Senate from the State; and

(B) 2 members shall be appointed by the Secretary, after consideration of the recommendation of the Member of the House of Representatives whose district encompasses the National Heritage Area.

The best way to accomplish this direction is to craft a standard agenda built around the management plan's topics, examining the Commission's goals associated with each. Where the Commission is to provide leadership for specific programs or projects, it can ask committees to take the lead on the details, as discussed in the next section. The committee would check in with the Commission for direction as appropriate to the level of discussion to be sustained in Commission meetings.

The Commission itself is an important organization within the heritage area, as forum and leader, idea-maker and resource provider. In addition to progress on the heritage area's plan, the Commission's own growth and development, its culture, and its relationships deserve the Commission's attention, asking, "How are we doing as an organization?" Routine examination of this question is healthy and can be a topic of committee discussion using Commissioner surveys and interviews.

ACTION: Organize standing Commission agendas around the topics of the management plan and resource development to maintain focus on the "big picture." Use the Executive Committee to review and approve agendas for each Commission meeting.

7.2.3 Commission Committees

If the Commission's meetings are where the big picture comes into play, its committees, on the other hand, are the place where Commissioners examine the details of programs, projects, and routine operations. There are two kinds of committees – standard administrative committees commonly found in nonprofit and quasi-governmental organizations of a wide variety, generally established through bylaws; and groups organized to support mission and programs, that is, committees established for the long term through bylaws or other kinds of working bodies that may be temporary and/or combine non-Commission members.

Currently, the Commission's bylaws provide for one committee, the Executive Committee, comprising the four Commission officers and the National Park Service director's designee, and chaired by the Commission's Chairperson. This committee is responsible for establishing other committees; the Chairperson appoints members to these committees.
There are currently two committees established by the Executive Committee following a recommendation of the Commission:

(1) **A committee addressing finance and budget issues,** which should be made permanent and tasked with examining the finances thoroughly prior to Commission meetings and explaining key points to the full Commission. The committee would also be responsible for overseeing annual financial reviews and providing a financial statement for the annual report. Financial management is discussed in a section below; and

(2) **A committee addressing public outreach**, which should be made permanent and responsible for communications planning as described in a section below.

Other administrative committees should be considered as the Commission evolves to deal with operations:

(3) A committee to deal with governance – including such issues as bylaws updates, strategic planning, operational retreats and Commissioner training, and advising the Executive Committee on the establishment of short- and long-term committees. In the latter role, this committee could assist in the task of documenting the "job descriptions" for these committees. It could also assist the Commission in seeking its nominators' actions in filling vacancies.

(4) A committee to address resource development, discussed in a later section. (For the time being, however, the finance and budget committee can provide some direction for this task.)

Other Commission committees are called for or implied in preceding chapters of this management plan, and later in this section, which would support the mission and programs:

(5) An Interpretive Committee and Committee of Historians, both to support the ambitious interpretive plan laid out in Chapter 2, Niagara's Interpretive Presentation;

(6) A Tourism Committee, or a series of working committees charged with particular tourism projects, either (or perhaps both) of which would be helpful in coordinating the ambitious plan for improving other elements of the visitor experience in addition to interpretation that is laid out in Chapter 2, Niagara's Visitor Experience, and for generally helping to stimulate heritage tourism. For example, the Commission expects to establish a two-level quality standards program and enroll attractions, events, and visitor services (businesses) that qualify; to stimulate a broad hospitality program, again with a recognition element for "Ambassadors" who have completed the program; to engage in the regional dialogue on wayfinding, and so on. Each of these is a large project with long-standing responsibilities; and

(7) An Educators' Advisory Committee or working group to assist the Commission in developing the many programs for community and educational outreach described in Chapter 4, Community Engagement.

(8) A Research Advisory Group to assist the Commission in outlining a program for historical research and devising research protocols, as described in Chapter 5, Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship, section 5.4.

(9) A Partnership Development Committee, discussed further below in a section of the same name. This committee would design programs to support partners, review applications for support, and otherwise insure that every action possible undertaken by the Commission supports partners in useful if not innovative ways.

Such committees are crucial elements in developing the system of highly engaged partners envisioned in this plan. They should be forums for developing and supporting programs, down to advising on resource development and staff work plans and even recruiting volunteers for events or specific work activities, or for service on certain committees as appropriate.

The great responsibility conferred on such committees should yield great results. This level of responsibility, however, needs to be recognized especially with respect to Commissioners' time. While the startup phase for the Commission that has included creation of this management plan has required meetings nearly every month, this is not a pace that can or should be maintained once Commissioners are also expected to devote considerable time to committee duties. Commission meetings consume a great deal of staff time as well as Commissioners' time – and time will be a precious resource for both in accomplishing many programs and projects.

ACTION: Organize standing Commission committees around critical long-term topics of the management plan and critical functions of Commission operations; be flexible as to committee assignments, membership, and responsibilities.

ACTION: In establishing each committee, provide a specific job description.

ACTION: Delegate detailed review of programs, projects, and operations to committees. Expect these committees to provide summary reporting in Commission meetings in relation to accomplishments of the goals of the management plan.

ACTION: Arrange Commission meeting schedules to support Commissioners' spending time to support Commission committees as well as to attend Commission meetings.

A critical "best practice" for maintaining long-term coherence of Commission policies and decisions is the creation of an operations manual that describes such things as the roles and responsibilities of committees and current members. It might actually be a series of volumes or files that includes such items as job descriptions and other human resources policies. A paper copy in this instance is desirable for the sake of document integrity and preservation, maintained in a safe location; its contents can also be maintained on computer.

ACTION: Establish an operations manual documenting all Commission policies and procedures.

7.2.4 Local Coordinating Entity

The federal legislation that established the Commission provided for its "sunset" five years after its passage, on May 7, 2013; Congressional authorization for the heritage area's funding, however, sunsets on May 7, 2023. The variance in dates was designed to encourage final resolution of the question of what is the most desirable form for a local coordinating entity to take.

Resolution of that question was to be accomplished during management planning and early implementation, a "startup" phase that was anticipated to provide the Commission with a sufficient length of time to achieve:

- Solid start-up with accomplishments and fully functional operations and staff;
- Strong relationships within the "partnership system" described below, especially in building relationships with other federal agencies;

- Effective operational experience; and
- General agreement on long-term structure of a local coordinating entity.

For a variety of reasons, however, startup has required more time than anticipated. At this point, the Commission would probably have less than a year to begin the first phase of implementing the management plan following its approval by the Secretary of the Interior, anticipated for the fall of 2012.

The Commission has taken an important step in considering the issue of the long-term form for the local coordinating entity. First, it has discussed establishing a parallel nonprofit organization to undertake certain administrative duties where nonprofit status provides more operational flexibility than that of a federal commission; this includes receipt of funds and donations of goods and services raised or obtained on behalf of the Commission and the awarding of small grants to heritage area partners. This organization would be intended to serve as a support structure, well away from the activism often associated with the concept of nonprofit work. Pending legal advice on the form such a nonprofit must take in New York State through the process of incorporating, establishing bylaws, and seeking state and federal nonprofit status, the board of directors of this nonprofit is expected to comprise the entire Commission and no others. It would be what is known as a self-perpetuating board, in charge of naming its successors (bylaws would specify eligibility mirroring the Commission). The direct link between the two organizations would be established by cooperative agreement stipulating the ways in which the nonprofit is to serve the Commission.

Should the Commission cease to exist as a federal entity, this nonprofit could assume the larger role of local coordinating entity, as seamlessly as possible. It offers, in effect, a contingency plan that works to assure partners, donors and the public of the firm commitment of the coordinating entity to the long-term success of the National Heritage Area, in the face of the uncertainty surrounding the May 2013 sunset.

Establishment of this nonprofit, however, does not fully resolve the question of what the long-term coordinating entity should be. There are certain arguments for continuing the Commission with more time, perhaps making it permanent:

- Federal status grants the Commission a status held by no other nonprofit or agency serving the region's heritage (with the sole exception of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Commission, also a federal commission serving a national heritage area). It enables the building of relationships with federal agencies and tribal nations in ways that simple nonprofit status would not.
- The process of filling Commission seats through nominations by public officials and appointment by the Secretary of the Interior grants additional public status to the Commission.
- The makeup of the Commission, comprising representatives of major state, tribal, and local players in the region, is particularly beneficial to the operation of a national heritage area, which functions best when key actors collaborate effectively.

- It is appropriate that there be a federal role for one collaborator among these players, given the international border; the national, tribal, and international significance of Niagara Falls; and the significant international history of Fort Niagara.

7.3 Elements of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area's Partnership System

This section lists critical elements of the heritage area's "partnership system." Reduced to its essence, the heritage area concept is a value-added approach to building a system out of "the parts" – those attractions, programs, and experiences that are the reasons the heritage area was established in the first place. Those responsible for these "reasons" continue to maintain and invest in them, and so their continued spending and policies contribute to the heritage area's growth and development over time. This section is designed to provide useful background and identify actions related to partners and potential supporters.

Much of the emphasis here, as elsewhere in this plan, is on building relationships and mutual regard among partners in the effort to motivate the extra support and collective action that are the "value-added" elements to be stimulated by the heritage area. It is always better to maintain relationships outside of "hat in hand" visits, where the Commission is seeking a certain action or actions from a partner or supporter. Several of the entities described here have actual power in relation to the Commission, as nominators of those who occupy Commission seats; all, however, can contribute a great deal more than this to the heritage area, if they are well-informed and included in relevant deliberations from the outset.

Key partners and the roles they play are described in Table 7-1. Those partners are further described in this section.

7.3.1 Partners

As also stated above, the Commission is not, in and of itself, the heritage area. The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area is a collective effort, involving organizations and agencies represented on the Commission and others with a stake in the success of the heritage area. Partnerships, informal or formal, are critical to this success.

"Partners" as defined for this management plan are those nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, and such civic groups as organizers of events celebrating local heritage, all with a direct stake in the success of the heritage area. They may be true partners, in the sense of having a relationship with the Commission through written agreement to accomplish mutually important tasks – or they may not.

This management plan expects partners to present elements of the heritage area's interpretive and other offerings individually or through collaboration, to communicate with one another and the Commission, and to embrace the plan wholeheartedly and implement it to the best of their ability. Ideally, they see the plan and Commission as enabling them to accomplish more than they can accomplish individually and they are willing to invest, make policy changes, and otherwise align their existing programs for the good of the whole.

As a first task, partners are asked to state their support for the management plan as it is submitted to the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor, and to convey commitments they expect to make in its implementation. Partners should be as fully engaged in the work and success of the heritage area as a whole as possible. Service on Commission committees is an important way to achieve this engagement, involving individuals who represent partners. Such participants are to be recruited for Commission committees where and when appropriate.

Some heritage areas create a single standing committee for partners that undertakes a first level of review of programs, projects, grants, etc. – looking broadly across all heritage area programs. It is possible that such a "partners' committee" (broader than the Commission itself, which is already, in effect, a gathering of representatives of many partners) might evolve over time. To be able to identify the best ways to organize all committees where partners are to play a role, the Commission must first gain experience in operating programs identified in the management plan.

ACTION: Obtain letters of endorsement for this plan from Commission partners and other existing and potential partners.

ACTION: Ask non-Commissioner representatives of partners represented on the Commission and other partner representatives to serve on committees and working groups.

7.3.2 Marketing Role and Partnerships

The Commission's role in tourism, as described in detail in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*, is to focus on product development, that is, on enhancing visitor experience. Its role in marketing is to ensure that visitors, once here, thoroughly understand their options and have an excellent experience that will translate to that most valuable tool of marketing, word of mouth.

Tourism marketing, in the traditional sense of spending dollars on understanding which audiences are most likely to become visitors and figuring out how best to reach them, already receives considerable spending by the Niagara Tourism and Convention Corporation (NTCC) and the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau (BNCVB). The role of such organizations as NTCC and BNCVB is largely to encourage audiences to get to the regions they serve; once visitors arrive, it is up to entrepreneurs and attractions to make sure that visitors understand their specific options.

The heritage area's approach, however, is not as a single entity competing among many. Rather, it seeks to encourage the kinds of collaboration and collective

What Stimulates Successful Collaboration?

The authors of a study of the first 17 years of the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor in Pennsylvania have this to say about factors that have enhanced partnerships there: "It is essential to establish collaborative processes that enhance...the partnership system. Such processes include:

- *Meaningful community engagement on an ongoing basis;*
- *Continually telling the story and promoting the vision in ways that connect people and communities across the Corridor;*
- *Responsiveness to local needs and priorities;*
- *Operating with an open, inclusive, collaborative approach... [that] involves effective listening and communication; sincerity, honesty, respect, patience, and trust; shared responsibility and transparent and flexible operations; and a willingness to try new approaches...;*
- *Partner organizations [that] redefine their goals and ways of working to align with the Corridor goals and vision; finally,*
- *A commitment to learning and to implementing the learning helps to hone the dynamic partnership system as it evolves and matures.*

(Credit: Copping, Suzanne E., Philip B. Huffman, Daniel N. Laven, Nora J. Mitchell, and Jacquelyn L. Tuxill; Connecting Stories, Landscapes, and People: Exploring the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. Sustainability Study Report. A Technical Assistance Project for the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Commission and the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Inc.; Woodstock, VT: Conservation Study Institute, 2006, p. 59; emphasis in the original, punctuation altered to create as a list; presentation courtesy Crossroads of the American Revolution Association, Inc., from its National Heritage Area management plan, 2011.)

enhancements that improve the chances of all to succeed in serving visitors – and doing it so well that ultimately the region is a shining example of tourism at its best. A standing committee to guide this approach will make the best use of the collective knowledge and resources available through the organizations, agencies, and businesses of the heritage area. This is in addition to the tourism projects and programs mentioned in the section above discussing Commission committees; this committee would specifically manage important relationships and projects specifically related to marketing.

ACTION: Establish a Tourism Marketing Committee.

7.3.3 Federal Role

Federal recognition provides credibility and reinforces the long-term importance of the heritage area for partners and communities.

Under the federal law establishing the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, the Secretary of the Interior is permitted to "provide technical assistance...for the development and implementation of the management plan" and "enter into cooperative agreements with interested parties" to support the heritage area (P.L. 110-229, Title B, Sec. 424(c)(6)(A)). Generally, such assistance is provided through the National Park Service.

In addition, Sec. 427(g)(1) of the heritage area's federal legislation, in conferring authorities on the Commission, states that it may "request and accept from the head of any Federal agency, on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis, any personnel of the Federal agency to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission."

The Director of the National Park Service or his representative is named as a member of the federal Commission. This is a key role for the NPS that has brought benefits to the Commission in the form of ongoing coordination of the heritage area's funding and its relationships with other National Heritage Areas. The Commission expects to seek further assistance specifically for interpretive services, which could take a variety of forms, from short-term assistance from visiting NPS staff to address specific needs of specific projects to a ranger detailed to provide a range of services.

The Northeast Regional Office is an important guide to National Park Service resources. That office maintains a coordinator to work with heritage areas and provide liaison with the national office. The Northeast Regional Office, working with the national office as appropriate, specifically could offer:

- Regular meetings between Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and NPS regional leaders;
- Staff exchanges to help foster mutual understanding of each other's needs, skills, and opportunities; and
- Collaborative exploration of opportunities to draw on the experience of heritage area participants in addressing challenges that are increasingly important for the NPS, such as making its programs relevant to a 21st century population, connecting with audiences through many levels of education, working successfully through partnerships, achieving meaningful conservation in lived-in landscapes, and developing effective landscape-

scale interpretive programs. The Director of the National Park Service recently issued a "Call to Action" with a series of challenges to the NPS and its many supporters. Exploration with the Northeast Regional Office should focus on exactly how the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area could support the "Call to Action."

There may be other federal assistance to be sought over time; the Commission should build relationships with federal agencies and their state-local counterparts, including those with economic grants or cost-share programs (USDA, HUD), Homeland Security, Army Corps, Coast Guard, etc., so that they understand the purpose and progress of the heritage area and can contribute as appropriate.

The members of the heritage area's Congressional delegation – the state's two U.S. Senators and the region's representation in the House of Representatives – are responsible for nominating Commissioners and should receive the courtesy of routine briefings. They and their staffs can be helpful in identifying sources of federal assistance.

ACTION: Request interpretive services from the National Park Service.

ACTION: Seek "details" of personnel from the National Park Service to assist with short-term projects.

ACTION: Maintain a memorandum of understanding with the NPS for assistance with Commission operations.

ACTION: Maintain NPS liaison role (as provided during management planning).

ACTION: Build relationships with agencies at the federal level whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.

ACTION: Provide routine briefings to members of the New York State Congressional delegation.

7.3.4 Tribal Government Role

Tribal nations are independent, with governments that have important roles to play in relating to the federal status of the Commission. Two tribal nations, the Seneca Nation and the Tuscarora Nation, like others named in this section, are represented on the Commission. Their Commissioners can be expected to update tribal leaders routinely and to communicate their interests at Commission meetings. As an investment in goodwill and mutual understanding, the Commission should also endeavor to establish direct relationships with those leaders in a process to be mutually determined, perhaps by providing briefings at appropriate tribal meetings on a routine basis, at least yearly.

ACTION: Engage in diplomatic relations with tribal nations and consult on projects of mutual benefit.

7.3.5 State Role

Niagara Falls State Park and Other State Parks

State coordination and support is critical for implementing several elements of the management plan. This is true most especially in the case of Niagara Falls State Park and Old Fort Niagara (state-owned although operated under state license by a nonprofit partner, Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc.), Artpark (with an arrangement similar to the fort's), Joseph Davis State Park (another similar arrangement with the Town of Lewiston in collaboration with the National Audubon Society), and other parks and state properties along the Niagara River Gorge. There are also state parks in Niagara and Erie counties that are thematically related to the national heritage area. The role of Niagara Falls State Park and other parks is described in Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Presentation*.

From a management perspective, however, one point is important to make here. Under the heritage area's federal legislation, the Governor nominates several members of the Commission. Among these is the requirement to include an individual "with knowledge and experience of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation" (OPRHP). That "seat" is currently occupied by the senior administrator for the western district of OPRHP, who supervises the operations of Niagara Falls State Park. As terms of office run their course and vacancies occur, the Commission should endeavor to ensure that an official with such high-level responsibility and perspective always is nominated and appointed.

Other State Roles

The Secretary of the Interior is required to consult with the Governor prior to approving the management plan (Sec. 424(c)(2)). For this reason alone, the Governor's office should receive routine briefings on the heritage area's progress from this point forward.

In addition, over time, the heritage area's federal legislation requires the Governor to continue to assist the Commission by nominating individuals to the Commission. In addition, the Governor can also be helpful in expressing support for state agencies' actions to develop and maintain the heritage area, and may be amenable to coordinating agencies' contributions.

State legislators can also help to influence state agencies' support; they should also receive the courtesy of routine briefings.

ACTION: Ensure high-level representation from OPRHP on the Commission.

ACTION: Provide routine briefings to the Governor and seek help with coordination of state agencies' contributions to implementation of the management plan.

ACTION: Provide routine briefings to elected officials representing heritage area jurisdictions in the State Senate and Assembly.

ACTION: Build relationships with agencies at the state level whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.

7.3.6 Local Government Role

Municipal local governments, like others named in this section, are represented on the Commission. Commissioners representing these jurisdictions can be expected to brief local elected and appointed officials as opportunities arise and to communicate their interests at Commission meetings.

This does not, however, excuse the Commission from establishing Commission-to-local-government relationships, which should include Niagara County. Providing routine briefings provided to elected officials at their regular meetings, perhaps on an annual basis, or hosting a collective meeting for a special briefing, is a courtesy and an investment in local goodwill and public visibility that goes with interaction at local government meetings.

ACTION: Provide routine briefings to local government officials.

7.3.7 Partnerships with Related Agencies

Several agencies affecting the region's heritage development are specifically represented on the Commission by stipulation in the federal legislation. In addition to the previously mentioned NTCC and OPRHP, they are:

- Niagara River Greenway Commission
- New York Power Authority (NYPA)
- USA Niagara Development Corporation (commonly called USA Niagara, it is a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation, a state agency)

Each is significant in its effects on the heritage area. The Greenway and USA Niagara both are deliberate players in heritage development activities, and NYPA is a major funder for such activities.

Niagara River Greenway Commission

The Greenway's mission is "to continue and advance the state's commitment to the preservation, enhancement and development of the world-renowned scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources of the Niagara River Greenway Commission while continuing to emphasize economic development activities and remaining consistent with the tradition of municipal home rule." Its plan guides applications for grants to projects to address recreational access and other improvements along the Niagara River and its tributaries; applications are considered quarterly.

The Greenway's plan is available at http://www.niagaragreenway.org/sites/all/themes/nrgc/FINAL %20REPORT.pdf

USA Niagara

USA Niagara works to improve a defined "Niagara Development District" within the City of Niagara Falls next to Niagara Falls State Park. It "is solely dedicated to the support and promotion of economic development initiatives in Niagara Falls by leveraging private investment and encouraging growth and renewal of the tourism industry in the City of Niagara Falls." (http://www.usaniagara.com/about_us.asp) It makes significant public investment available within its district and acts directly to support development projects in its plan, following established urban design standards; its website lists a dozen major

NYPA's Support Has Strengthened Qualities of the National Heritage Area

Benefits to Western New York communities and projects materialized even before the start of NYPA's 2007 license, with December 2005 payments of $8 million and $5 million, respectively, to the Niagara Power Coalition, comprising the seven host communities within the project's boundaries, and to the Tuscarora Nation. A 2006 settlement agreement included funding for the Niagara River Greenway, for which NYPA will provide a total of $9 million a year for greenway development in Erie and Niagara counties; $3 million of this benefits Niagara Falls State Park and other state parks within the Niagara River Greenway. Other benefits of the relicensing process affecting the heritage area include:

- *Provision of hydropower to the host communities, the Tuscarora Nation, and Niagara University (the latter two are adjacent to the project), expected to provide hundreds of millions of dollars in savings for those entities over the 50-year term of the new license.*
- *Creation of a $12 million fund for construction of eight Habitat Improvement Projects (HIPs) at designated areas outside the Niagara project's boundaries, to protect fish and wildlife within the Niagara River basin. Another $1 million is available annually for additional HIPs, to be identified by an Ecological Standing Committee composed of representatives of key local and state organizations.*
- *NYPA capital improvements to enhance public access to the river in the area of the project, including additional parking for anglers and others, at a cost of nearly $6 million, including (1) Upper Mountain Trail and Parking Lot development; (2) Robert Moses Fishing Pier Parking enhancements; and (3) Upper Niagara Intake Structure site improvements.*
- *Improvements to recreational facilities operated by the OPRHP within or in the vicinity of the project boundary supported by a fund of nearly $9.3 million established for this purpose, which OPRHP has devoted to (1) Reservoir State Park; (2) Niagara River Gorge trails; and (3) Earl W. Brydges State Park (Artpark).*

capital investment projects in which it is or has been involved, http://www.usaniagara.com/projects.asp, including multiple projects along Old Falls Street (the city's "gateway" to Niagara Falls State Park) and the Third Street Entertainment District. USA Niagara's plan is available at http://www.usaniagara.com/dev_strategy.asp.

New York Power Authority

NYPA is a major landowner in the Gorge and its operation of the major hydroelectric power system on the U.S. side of the river affects the river's flow. More than $1 billion in financial support and other benefits have been forthcoming for Western New York under NYPA's re-licensing, for 50 years following September 1, 2007, under an alternative relicensing procedure of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). [This statement and the following discussion are based on a press release dated 9/6/07 and found at http://www.nypa.gov/press/2007/070906a.htm, accessed 12/28/11.] That procedure drew extensive participation by more than 100 stakeholders in the area – state and federal resource agencies, local municipalities, customers, and environmental groups – and led to six settlement agreements including financial commitments for capital projects, infrastructure, economic development, the environment, recreational facilities, and various other enhancements, all of which have strengthened the qualities of the National Heritage Area (see sidebar).

Other Economic Development Agencies

Other economic development agencies besides USA Niagara are also important players in the region, including the recently formed Western New York Regional Economic Development Council (WNYREDC). This agency guided $100.3 million to 96 economic development projects out of $785 million awarded by Governor Cuomo in December 2011. Recognized as the best plan submitted from among all regional councils competing for the funds, the council's plan included a focus on attracting more visitors and identified tourism as one of eight industry sectors strategic to the region's growth. It made several key points about tourism that are discussed in Chapter 3, Niagara's Visitor Experience (http://governor.ny.gov/press/12082011RegionalCouncils, accessed 12/28/11) The WNYREDC is intended to coordinate the state's involvement in the economic development of Erie, and Niagara counties, along with similar efforts in Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties; for more information, see http://www.governor.ny.gov/press/ 07262011DevelopmentCouncil and http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/western-new-york.

Niagara County's work in economic development is coordinated through the Niagara County Center for Economic Development (http://www.nccedev.com/content/about-niagara-county-center-economic-development).

Niagara Falls Bridge Commission

Another major partner, potentially, is the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission, a unique international agency established in 1938 by both the U.S. and Canada to finance, construct

and operate the Rainbow Bridge. It now also operates the Whirlpool Rapids (Lower) and Lewiston-Queenston bridges and maintains facilities for customs and immigration functions on both sides of the border. The NFBC is self-supporting, largely through user fees (tolls) and private-sector tenant leases. Canada and the U.S. are equally represented on the NFBC by an eight-member Board of Commissioners, appointed by the Premier of the Province of Ontario and the Governor of the State of New York, respectively.

As the Commission's website states, Niagara Falls

> beckons visitors from around the globe. But it is the bridges that actually bring most of them here. No other single factor contributes more to tourism growth – indeed the export trade economy overall – than the NFBC's three monumental linkages of concrete and steel. Niagara Falls crossings rank second only to Kennedy International as the busiest port of entry between the U.S. and Canada... Trade traversing the U.S.-Canada border exceeds $1-billion per day. Niagara Falls crossings ring up $26-billion per year. That's $3-million rolling over the borders every hour. More than 500,000 U.S. and Canadian jobs depend on export traffic traveling across NFBC connectors.

In its Community Request Policy, the Commission states that it "has always interpreted its mandate to the maximum benefit of the community with respect to paying voluntary local taxes and supporting community organizations," and defines its mission as supporting "cross border relations, tourism and international commerce through the efficient movement of people and goods over its Niagara River crossings." It awards grants, generally twice a year, only to "public organizations operating for the benefit of the border communities," including nonprofit community-based organizations. Criteria include programs, projects, and activities that benefit the NFBC and are consistent with its mission; benefit to the bi-national border community; and NFBC benefit from association with the grantee. The community request policy and application form may be found at http://niagarafallsbridges.com/ comrequest.pdf.

Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority

Another major partner, potentially, is the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA). The role of this organization pertains to transportation challenges to be addressed by the Commission in concert with other regional players, as discussed in Chapter 3, Niagara's Visitor Experience.

Institutions of Higher Learning

Institutions of higher learning in or near the National Heritage Area are or could be significant partners. These include Buffalo State University, Niagara County Community College, and Niagara University, all of which have faculty serving as Commissioners; and the University at Buffalo. UB's urban and regional planning program has long been a leader for regional studies that have examined important issues in the U.S.-Canadian region surrounding Niagara Falls, including significant public participation.

The Commission will build relationships over time with all of these through projects. Existing efforts offer clues to how projects might help the Commission build relationships and how these institutions might achieve objectives of this management plan. For example,

a key heritage development project in downtown Niagara Falls (also supported by USA Niagara and WNYREDC), is now underway, renovation of nearly 90,000 square feet of the former Rainbow Centre in Niagara Falls by Niagara County Community College. The facility will be a Hospitality and Tourism Center, to include the Culinary Institute of Niagara Falls.

As another example, Niagara University is currently studying the possibility of establishing a permanent presence in downtown Niagara Falls for its College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, assessing potential economic development impact, tourism development opportunities, and the existing program's needs. As described in a recent newsletter of USA Niagara – which has funded NU's study – "the College is a founding member of the Leading Hotel Schools of the World and is recognized globally within the industry, ranking in the top 20 hospitality and tourism programs in the country. Building upon the benefits of Niagara County Community College's soon-to-be-completed Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, an NU presence could potentially add hundreds of additional students to the downtown landscape. Well-trained graduates of these institutions will be members of the future hospitality work-force, as well as investors, entrepreneurs and hoteliers." (Source: http://www.usaniagara.com/pdfs/Newsletters/E-Bulletin2011Vol1compressed.pdf) Related to this is another idea for NU, not as far along and described in section 7.7.2, a Heritage Tourism Institute.

ACTION: Build a relationship with the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

ACTION: Build relationships with USA Niagara and other economic development agencies whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.

ACTION: Build a relationship with the New York Power Authority.

ACTION: Build a relationship with the Niagara Falls Bridge Commission.

ACTION: Build a relationship with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.

ACTION: Build relationships with institutions of higher learning in or serving the National Heritage Area which can provide services and funding.

7.3.8 The Need for an Organization of "Friends"

Recent discussion among Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commissioners has addressed the potential of creating a "friends group" that would be open to membership by both residents and visitors. Residents would have a rallying point to show their support and would form a pool of local volunteers for the Commission and National Heritage Area programs benefiting a wide variety of partners. Visitors would view joining such an organization as a way of expressing their gratitude for their experience and making a lasting contribution of "friendship" to help preserve the marvelous resources of the heritage area. Such an organization would enable the Commission to identify its natural constituency and to reach out to potential volunteers. The Commission's parallel nonprofit could use this constituency and pool of volunteers to begin the most basic of tasks in

creating long-term support from major donors, building lasting relationships with those most interested in the organization's mission.

An organization serving such "friends" would make sure that its constituents know the National Heritage Area from the inside, would communicate events and other offerings to residents and visitors via various media (e-newsletter, Twitter, etc.), and could offer "members-only, behind-the-scenes" kinds of tours or events. It could also enlist members' support when needed by the National Heritage Area – for example, in encouraging outreach to public officials whose support is needed by the Commission for projects and funding.

There are a few drawbacks to such an organization to weigh against these benefits – all of which can be ameliorated, with work. First, and twofold, establishing and maintaining such an organization would claim the energies of both Commission and staff; and such organizations rarely pay for themselves in funds taken in versus expenses. Even maintaining a friends group via a Facebook page, a first step recommended here and in Chapter 3, Niagara's Visitor Experience, can require considerable staff attention. "Costs versus benefits," of course, is a different calculation. The reason to establish such organizations is less about raising funds – despite the prospect of identifying major donors over time as mentioned above – and more about "raising friends." The bottom line for this point: a "friends group" can be a formidable communications vehicle – but at a cost.

Second, people and organizations induced to "join" such organizations expect benefits, even if this is simply an expectation of regular updates and communications and fresh ideas appearing on the Facebook page. These, too, come at a cost, and moreover, the demand never ends. Once the expectation is there, it must be met, routinely and often enough to keep members interested and re-joining. Establishing a Facebook page that does more than direct visitors to the Commission's primary web site is a large responsibility.

ACTION: Create a presence on Facebook to brand and build interest in the National Heritage Area and identify a following. (Related to Chapter 3 Action: Take advantage of trends in social media, creating a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Yelp, and other appropriate social media applications.)

ACTION: Evaluate the use of Facebook's feature allowing "fans" to self-identify as a first step or element of support in developing a following of "friends" of the National Heritage Area.

7.3.9 Thinking Regionally

The Commission's primary goal related to this chapter includes an aspiration for regional leadership:

- **Heritage Area Management and Regional Positioning –** Work to extend the communication, coordination, and cooperation among governments, communities, and organizations that are essential to regional success in heritage tourism.

This is a natural tendency, given the regional nature of some of the organizations represented on the Commission, and the fact that the Commission itself is coordinating a regional entity, the heritage area. To compound this tendency toward thinking and acting regionally,

the Commission has a responsibility to bring thematically related interpretive sites into the fold (see Chapter 2, *Niagara's Interpretive Experience*, for more on this point).

To exert regional leadership takes energy. The Commission must focus on building individual relationships among the partners described in Section 7.3 as a whole, but as it does so, there will be opportunities to bring those partners together. Where such gathering of forces can help the heritage area make progress in implementing the management plan and share resources without diluting them, this can be considered a useful activity, supporting basic relationship-building. The same is true of participation in regional activities led by others – there is justification for the time and energy this takes where it will help to solidify relationships with organizations and agencies that can help the heritage area.

Aside from building ties among partners and supporters, however, the Commission has a real opportunity to offer the region leadership in two particular ways: first, in heritage tourism, and second in historic preservation.

The Tourism Marketing Committee described in section 7.3.2 is the vehicle through which the Commission can provide leadership in heritage tourism.

As for historic preservation, Chapter 6, *Preservation, Conservation, and Stewardship*, calls for planning and training activities to support heightened preservation awareness and action in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown. As the Commission organizes these activities, it is possible to invite others from Niagara County. Their participation is likely to add to the general experience of sharing information and examining local situations for problem-solving exercises. The Commission can also organize these activities in concert with another regional player, Preservation Buffalo Niagara, which serves seven counties in Western New York.

7.4 Partner Development

Section 7.6 notes why "fundraising" is now often called "resource development" – because successful fundraising proceeds from developing relationships with sources (resources) for those funds.

In the same sense, "partnering" should be regarded as developing relationships, for the benefit of both parties – hence the title of this section addressing how to shape heritage area programs for partners is "partner development." Every action the Commission, staff, and partners undertake on behalf of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area can be regarded as an opportunity for enhancing partners' abilities to contribute to the collective benefit of the heritage area. (Just as every action is also an opportunity for communicating heritage area messages, and for developing relationships that will support successful fundraising, both points hammered home in sections below.)

The Commission has great potential for assisting and lending credibility to the goals and endeavors of partners. Emphasizing working relationships among partners is an important means of building the heritage area and accomplishing its goals in a mutually beneficial way.

The idea of partner development goes far beyond the usual hope of heritage areas' partners for grants. Yes, grants can be a part of partner development, depending on the extent to which the Commission decides grants can further the goals of this management plan, versus spending funds directly on technical assistance to partners or other programs where the Commission must spend its funding directly in order to be successful. Here are many other ideas to be considered in developing a complete program for partner development:

- Technical assistance for planning
- Technical assistance for program and product development
- Technical assistance for fundraising and grant writing (especially writing grant applications for heritage area funding)
- Matchmaking/committees & projects
- Networking/gatherings
- Training programs and workshops
- Quality control programs that let partners promote their achievements
- Best practices/technology transfer/skill-sharing
- Recognition programs ("best of," "most improved," etc.)
- Coalitions and joint ventures
- Endorsement of partners' grants to others
- Sponsorship of "expos" for funders to meet partners, or for partners to share information with one another and the resident public
- Docent and volunteer recruitment and training
- "Grants" that are awards of technical assistance, rather than dollars

The Commission's intent is to share some of its federal funding with partners in the form of matching grants. As noted in the above list, however, monetary matching grants are only one way to build partners' capacity; for example, in some cases, it may be useful to ask partners to compete for consulting assistance to be arranged by the Commission, also requiring the applicant to bring a match to the table. Current policy of the Commission, developed in the early-action awarding of monetary grants for War of 1812 activities, is to require a three-to-one match.

Design of a grant program for the first phase of plan implementation is a high-priority activity that requires consideration of matching requirements, size limitations, and topical focus – activities that maximize a given emphasis in implementing management plan goals, year to year (see strategic planning, below). Allocation of funds to such grants will depend on the Commission's sense of how much of its budget it will devote to initiating its own programs versus supporting those of partners, and what programs within partner development it is most useful to emphasize. The Commission may choose in some years to devote its grant funding to one or more specific projects of highest priority for implementing the plan.

ACTION: Recognize that many Commission actions and programs encompass elements of a partner development program; craft and budget for a full program and communicate it to partners accordingly.

ACTION: Reserve a portion of the Commission's federal heritage area funding for small monetary grants that will build partners' capacity.

7.5 Communications

The Commission's role in communications is a large one. It must build the heritage area's identity and visibility among multiple audiences, both residents and visitors, creating a lasting presence. It must enable communication with and among partners – committees described above can be a major tool for this, along with other meetings or events designed to bring partners together. It must use up-to-the-minute technological advances, particularly to serve travelers; the Commission's website is a critical part of any set of communication strategies and can serve as a platform to support other technologies. Success in communications will enable long-term success in developing funding relationships and resources.

Just about everything – every program, every action – undertaken by the Commission has a communications angle. Just as the Commission is to cultivate its awareness for opportunities for developing relationships at every turn in order to support resource development (described in the following section), it will look for ways to maximize its visibility and its messages.

Branding and messaging – discussed in Chapter 3, *Niagara's Visitor Experience*, section 3.3 – is one part of organizing communications, and extends across all audiences. It is a critical element of building visitor awareness, and supports marketing plans that affect the heritage area. Communications planning is broader, encompassing how the Commission will communicate with partners and residents as well as visitors and potential visitor markets.

A communications plan should be a part of every annual work plan (described further below). It should address the following:

1. **Desired outcomes for communications by the Commission in its own right and on behalf of the heritage area**
2. **Background**
    A. Audiences – e.g., visitors, volunteers, residents of particular communities, businesses, local and state government officials (elected or otherwise), state and federal legislators, grantors, donors, and partner organizations.
    B. A simple listing of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (the traditional "SWOT" employed by planners of all kinds), used to assess the organization's progress in implementing the plan through communications, and its performance in communications the previous year.

C. Upcoming communications opportunities – both internal to the Commission's programs (e.g., training workshops) and external (partn ers' events)

3. **Messages (specific to each audience identified, following from primary messaging strategies developed for the Commission's branding program; and from desired outcomes identified for this plan)**

4. **Activities**

   A. Website

   B. Social media and evolving digital technologies; email communications

   C. Print media (e.g., brochures, annual report, newsletters, event promotional material such as invitations)

   D. Promotions (e.g., advertising, exhibits for meeting display, special banners)

   E. Events sponsored by the Commission (e.g., workshops)

   F. Media outreach (not an audience per se, but rather a means of reaching audiences, using, e.g., media releases, familiarization tours, press conferences for especially important moments, invitations to cover events, etc.)

   G. Annual report

   H. Materials to support the development plan

5. **Accomplishing activities – for each activity, express:**

   A. Calendar: timing and synchronization considerations

   B. Resources needed (staff time, funds, volunteers, Commission attention, etc.)

   C. Measurements for evaluating performance (e.g., increases in visits to the website, increases in donations from residents; rate of use of social media; participation at events; media coverage, etc.).

One particular activity to create "esprit de corps" among heritage area partners would be to hold an annual special event to review progress on the management plan and upcoming activities. This could include reports from Commission committees, an opportunity for partners to report to the Commission on their individual progress in contributing to the heritage area's development, and an awards program to recognize meritorious individuals and programs. The entire event should be regarded as a premier opportunity to communicate the purpose and vision for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.

ACTION: Create an annual communications plan within the Commission's annual work plan, coordinating with communications associated with interpretation, heritage tourism marketing, and fundraising and piggybacking on Commission activities that can be regarded as having a communications dimension.

ACTION: Make permanent the current committee formed to advise the Commission on planning and executing communications and public outreach during management planning.

ACTION: Hold regular gatherings of partners to review progress on the management plan.

ACTION: Create an awards program to recognize meritorious individuals and programs.

7.6 Resource Development

Successful fundraising relies on excellent development of relationships with funders and donors, existing and potential, along with grant writing. This emphasis on development of relationships is the reason why the preferred term for fundraising in recent years has become "resource development." This section of the plan will suggest objectives and strategies specifically associated with the development of relationships for ongoing support. It will address a special concern for heritage areas, potential competition with partners, to be addressed by collaborating and communicating fundraising strategies with partners.

7.6.1 Funds Available

Heritage areas expect to receive federal support once their management plans are complete. Programs supported under agreement with the federal program must be paid for up front, with the funds spent being reimbursed under National Park Service procedures. Federal funding is by no means assured, nor should or will it be assumed it will comprise the bulk of the Commission's budget.

Funds so provided to the Commission must be matched dollar for dollar, with the Commission's share of the match allowed to include "in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued" (P.L. 110-229, Title B, Sec. 409(c)). If partners receive federal funds via the Commission, they can be expected to provide a portion of the match required of the Commission, perhaps more than the 50-50 required of the Commission (Sec. 409(c)). Already, in one Commission early action, grantees receiving support for activities commemorating the War of 1812 were required to match federal dollars 3:1, not 1:1. This "overmatch" can be counted toward the Commission's 1:1 obligation, supporting activities that may not so readily find matching support (typically such overhead items as office space).

The funding available from federal heritage area allocations will never be enough to accomplish the work laid out in this management plan. It should be regarded as seed funding – a part of the status of the Commission that makes it a desirable funding partner, because those who might confer additional funding on the Commission will understand it as readily matching funds. Thus, the Commission has a large job ahead: to raise the necessary funds to achieve the vision for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. Fortunately, it is not alone. Partners, as well, are already spending funds on behalf of projects that will enhance the heritage area's capabilities and experience.

7.6.2 Organizing for Resource Development

A business plan includes a financial plan. A nonprofit organization like the Commission has a fundamentally different task from profit-making enterprises, where customers provide the support for the enterprise by purchasing its products and services. A successful enterprise attracts a sufficient customer based not only to sustain the entire enterprise,

but also to reward investors whose dollars provide startup costs and additional investments as the business grows. For the Commission, one kind of "customer" will be donors and granting agencies or institutions who perceive value in providing the necessary dollars for the Commission to do its work ("run its business"). In fact, a financial plan for a nonprofit must emphasize resource development – that is, identifying and building relationships with those who offer funds.

The task of identifying and going after the necessary funds to achieve the goals and strategies in this management plan is the job of every Commissioner – indeed, of every partner with a stake in the success of the heritage area. One mistake many nonprofit executive bodies make is to relegate the resource development function to a committee, and then worse, not attend to that committee's operation with the routine inclusion of resource development on the general agenda.

Organizing for resource development starts with an agenda (the Commission's) and people. Organizations that conceive of fundraising as "the job of the fundraising committee" rarely succeed – it is a team effort that should engage everyone involved in the organization's endeavors. Ideally, the Commission will have a resource development leadership team comprising the following:

- The Commission Chairperson, in tandem with the Executive Committee;
- A Resource Development Committee;
- A fully engaged Commission, with time on its agendas to address resource development, willingness to learn about the resource development process, and the ability to participate in calls on potential grantors and donors;
- A staff director (executive director);
- A resource development specialist (under contract or on staff);
- A communications staff or contractor fully on board with the idea of combining communications with resource development; and
- An administrative staff to support administration of incoming grants.

A basic ingredient in organizing is a strategic plan specifically for resource development. This plan is a record of decisions and direction based on research (what's possible?), analysis of strategies (how, in general, will we seek funds? Which audiences, which projects to emphasize?), and establishment of objectives (whose funds and how much will we seek?). The strategic resource development plan ideally would cover a three-year timeline, to be reviewed and updated annually. It provides guidance for the resource development activities to be detailed in the Commission's annual work plan, as described in section 7.8.2.

An experienced fundraising professional can advise the Commission in creating this plan, and can assist in carrying it out if planning reveals the desirability of such added horsepower. There are also many good how-to resources available through websites and books.

A Checklist for Ways to Raise Funds

- *Grant applications and requests for funding (or sponsorship) to*
  - *Foundations*
  - *Government agencies*
  - *Corporations*
- *Mid-year solicitation for an "annual fund" (unrestricted dollars to support the organization in general)*
- *An annual campaign for "end-of-year gifts (also generally understood by donors to be unrestricted)*
- *A program to solicit major donors;*
- *A campaign for a specific need, project, or program (restricted funding);*
- *Events and other "grassroots" fundraising opportunities at the community level (the familiar high school carwash, for example) – sometimes called "friend-raising" since such programs are better budgeted for raising enough funding to cover their costs, rather than as a significant source of cash;*
- *Endowment and capital campaigns – to build long-range resources;*
- *Cooperative fundraising activities with partners;*
- *Fee-for-service activities (charging for technical assistance to partners; or hiring out staff experts beyond the heritage area); and*
- *Enterprise activities.*

Finally, an important factor in success will be attitude – on the part of all involved in the Commission and heritage area. Gaining financial and other support should always be a factor in operating the Commission and designing the heritage area's programs. The Commission must be entrepreneurial, with everyone ready to pitch in where needed; there should be no one anywhere who does not see raising funds as a part of his or her job, with everyone watching for opportunities. Heritage area partners should be encouraged to understand the Commission's needs in meeting its responsibility to raise support for the entire heritage area, and to regard that challenge as their own, as partners with a stake in the heritage area's success.

ACTION: Establish and maintain a three-year strategic plan for resource development.

7.7 Operations and Staffing

7.7.1 Getting the Work Done – Staffing and Support

The Commission requires staffing and support to get its work done day to day. It is assumed that staffing growth will occur gradually from the current status quo, currently one part-time staff person serving as project director and providing logistical support for Commission meetings and committees. There are a wide range of skills required by a successful heritage area and not all will be fulfilled by staff. Alternatives to hiring staff include contracting with consultants, recruiting volunteers, delegating to Commission committees, or asking partners to share the load – or a creative combination of many of these for any given need. The programmatic recommendations provided in other chapters and the experience of other heritage areas suggest that the following functions are needed to be fulfilled by arrangements as the Commission decides – it is not possible to predict just how staffing and support should emerge, only that the following skills or roles should be on the menu as the Commission seeks assistance:

Administration:

- One person with an understanding of all aspects of the organization's role (an executive director is typically responsible to the board for such work, but coordination without executive responsibility is also possible given greater chairperson and executive committee involvement);
- Office administration, including support for information technology;
- Contract management;
- Communications, data management (web site, e-newsletter, database of contacts, etc., annual report, meeting management);
- Support for Commission and committee meetings;
- Strategic and work planning; and
- Public relations.

Finance:

- Financial administration (bookkeeping, reports, financial reviews);
- Resource development (fundraising) – planning and execution, including grant writing;

- Supervision of incoming and outgoing grants that support the Commission's work, including the necessary reports to funders;
- Supervision of small grants given by the Commission to heritage area partners; and
- Contract management support.

Mission:

A wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience is needed to implement the programs described in the preceding chapters of this plan:

- Chapter 2, Niagara's Interpretive Presentation: research, history, interpretation;
- Chapter 3, Niagara's Visitor Experience: tourism, branding, marketing, wayfinding, transportation;
- Chapter 4, Community Engagement: education for students and adults; public outreach, including use of the arts and events;
- Chapter 5, Community Revitalization: community planning, interpretation, trail development; and
- Chapter 6, Stewardship: historic preservation, conservation.

These all involve projects that the Commission might undertake directly or that the Commission will encourage others to undertake; for example, the element of partner outreach makes interpersonal and organizing skills as important as, say, skills relating to interpretation. Experience in the following could also be useful:

- Training;
- Public outreach;
- Facilitation (of meetings);
- Capital projects; and
- Project planning and management.

The generic functions described here can be combined and tailored to the skills and interests of the individuals who are hired to fulfill these functions – for example, an executive director may have an interest in historic preservation or community planning and be able to cover community revitalization issues, an administrative aide may be an expert meeting manager, or a public relations person may have a tourism background.

It should be noted that staff costs are emphatically not "overhead" costs in the sense of the "management and general" category for expenses required for reporting under the IRS Form 990 (the nonprofit organization's "tax return" – which technically does not apply to a federal commission but which provides a useful basis for discussion). Rather, staff costs (and expenses relating to support for staffing, such as mileage reimbursements) will be allocated as appropriate to programs that benefit from staff time. Many important programs can be achieved completely through staff; others, like workshops, require

funding for such things as educational materials, in addition to the funds required to cover associated staff costs. (In that example, of course, some of the costs can be covered through charging fees to participants.)

Interpretive services in particular could be provided in the form of an interpretive ranger at no or reduced cost by the NPS (see Sec. 424(c)(6)(A), which allows the Secretary of the Interior to "provide technical assistance under the authority of this subtitle for the development and implementation of the management plan." This idea has precedent in several heritage areas, including the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Area in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, both currently, and the Delaware & Lehigh Canal National Heritage Corridor in eastern Pennsylvania in its early years. Even if a full- or part-time NPS staffer is not made available, the National Park Service can provide staff on temporary detail to focus on various projects where short-term assistance would be helpful.

Tourism services could be provided through a contract with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute of Niagara University (NU). The concept for the "HTI" – which is only under informal consideration by university officials as this is written – is loosely modeled on another relationship between a heritage area and an institution of higher learning in New York, that is, a partnership between the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and Marist College's Hudson River Valley Institute (HRVI) in Poughkeepsie. The institute is an independent entity under contract to the Hudson River Valley Greenway, the heritage area's management entity, and has undertaken defined tasks and programs for the heritage area along with programs of its own initiative. HTI would be an expanded program aiding NU in managing its many existing community outreach programs that affect tourism and heritage development in the region. It could also be the home and repository for the cultural resource database and virtual archives described in general in Chapter 4, Community Engagement, sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2, and in Chapter 5, Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship, sections 5.4.5 and 5.4.6.

The projected minimum budget for the Commission would be approximately $500,000 for a fully developed staff and program, which may take several years to achieve at a stable, sustainable level. This estimate covers both staffing and staffing-related operational costs (e.g., travel, office costs), roughly 50 percent of a budget of any size; and programmatic costs related and unrelated to staffing (e.g., website or publication costs), which would be the other 50 percent. This 50-50 rule of thumb may vary from year to year according to budget size and program choices, but it provides a starting point for evaluating and proposing annual budgets. The $500,000 estimate is on par with or slightly less than the budgets of older heritage areas and is not meant to bind the Commission to any particular size of budget.

ACTION: Establish a three-year plan for the addition of staffing resources.

ACTION: Establish regular personnel and hiring/contracting procedures, including plans for staff training.

7.7.2 Financial Management

Although the Commission is a federal entity and its spending is therefore tracked through

official federal systems (managed for the Commission by the National Park Service), the Commission should establish its own financial management system that mirrors the required federal tracking through the proposed nonprofit partner. This partner's financial system should be designed to enable making real-time accounting information readily available to the Commission and staff, and the generation of financial data for planning, resource development (fundraising), and reports to funders (including the NPS) and the public.

Transparency is the general rule for a body such as the Commission; an annual report is a critical element of the communications plan described in section 7.5. The establishment of the nonprofit organization/foundation described above makes it incumbent on the Commission to keep careful accounts on behalf of both organizations, and understand the financial roles and responsibilities of both.

For both the Commission and its nonprofit, the Commission should or will establish an annual budget for each (over time, of course, based on historical financial data and resource development experience that enable fairly accurate projections of income and expenses). It would then examine the budget statements and balance sheets regularly, closely following the organization's progress in meeting its budget and managing such obligations as accounts payable and restricted funds, which are recorded in the balance sheet. Accounting software that allows an at-a-glance understanding of the budget compared to actual spending is important to use. Sometimes the rate of spending, rather than whether the organization is over or under budget in a certain line, is helpful information to keep programs on target.

A finance committee should or will be tasked with examining the finances thoroughly prior to Commission meetings and explaining key points to the full Commission. The committee would also be responsible for overseeing annual financial reviews and providing a financial statement for the annual report.

A good financial management system for a nonprofit organization should or will accomplish the following, at a minimum: (1) track a "chart of accounts" – typical of profit-and-loss budget statements usually reviewed by boards at each of their meetings – in sufficient detail to support annual financial reviews and reporting on the IRS Form 990[1]; (2) enable full knowledge of the actual cost of programs, by allocating portions of costs tracked in the chart of accounts and aggregating them[2]; and (3) enable automated financial reporting

1 Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) refers to the standards that accountants follow in the preparation of financial statements. See Wikipedia for a starting explanation. For a suggested listing of costs tracked by most nonprofit organizations, see http://nccs.urban.org/projects/ucoa.cfm, which provides templates for the Uniform Chart of Accounts published by the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS). GAAP and NCCS charts of accounts differ slightly; the NYS CDP follows GAAP and the IRS Form 990 is somewhat open-ended, prescribing only a few accounts that would be part of a complete chart of accounts.

2 This is not something easily seen at a glance by examining a chart of accounts, where every expense is typically coded and tracked in a standardized way. For example, a website might require staff time, a contractor, and an annual payment for the domain name, each of which would appear on separate lines in a chart of accounts. In Quickbooks, a popular bookkeeping program, understanding program costs is accomplished through using a second code for expenses to sort them into "classes," customiz-

specific to grants given to the organization by multiple sources.[3] Using such a system requires careful administration and a commitment to accuracy.

ACTION: Establish a computerized financial management system that generates sufficient financial data for planning, resource development (fundraising) and administration, and reports to funders and the public.

ACTION: Establish regular financial procedures to support the Commission's fiduciary responsibilities, including an annual budget and regular reviews of progress in meeting the budget.

7.8 Strategic Planning and Implementation

In general, this entire management plan is considered a long-range plan, describing much of what the Commission and those with a stake in the success of the heritage area expect to see develop over the course of ten years. The text in each section provides fairly detailed guidance in many instances, but the actions are stated in general terms, providing flexibility for on-the-ground, year-to-year program decisions. A strategic plan is a short-range plan, setting priorities and emphasizing those things most important to do more or less immediately; it, too, may have little detail. A well-maintained strategic plan is updated annually so that it always provides a time horizon of approximately three years; done this frequently and with solid, timely preparation, it should not require a great deal of time. An annual work session involving Commission and staff working together to address such planning can be sufficient; it also provides in-depth understandings that may or may not be documented in the strategic plan itself. The strategic plan guides annual work plans tied to budget and staff objectives, where program details are documented.

7.8.1 Overview: Critical Areas for Focus

High-priority activities will include activities (1) for which no other organizations are directly responsible, and (2) that encourage communities, sites, and partners to take collective action to support the heritage area and take individual advantage of its benefits:

- **Building the interpretive system;**
- **Improving the visitor experience**, including quality control, hospitality, and insuring that visitors can access interpretive offerings and recreational opportunities throughout the heritage area;

able to the organization's needs. (Customized classes in turn can be organized and aggregated to conform to the IRS 990's three primary expense categories, program service, management and general, and fundraising (Part IX, columns B, C, D).)

3 Again, this is not something easily seen through a glance at either the chart of accounts or a system that aggregates costs by program. The Quickbooks program allows a third coding system, used congruently with the other two described in these footnotes, called "Customer: Job." The funder is simply a customer (this makes a certain kind of sense – the funder is "buying" the nonprofit's services or programs), and each grant from that customer/funder is a "job." Spending for grants to these funders can be sorted and reported without analysts having to comb through unrelated expenses.

- **Improving visitors' opportunities for moving about the heritage area** – "from the Falls to the Fort" – including completing a network of trails for residents and visitors to enjoy the Gorge and working to assure maximum multi-modal transport opportunities;
- **Encouraging existing marketing organizations to collaborate** in reaching audiences that will embrace the heritage area experience;
- **Encouraging communities to take maximum advantage of heritage area investment opportunities** that support community revitalization and stewardship; and
- Supporting certain operational needs, especially **fundraising and communications**.

Table 7.2 lists all actions provided in this plan and assigns level of priority by defining them as short-term, mid-term, and long-term. It also recommends performance indicators and names those organizations or types of organizations that should be involved.

7.8.2 The Importance of Annual Work Plans

Section 7.7.2 emphasizes responsible financial management in several practical ways, including establishing an annual budget that will allow for comparison of income and expenses to budget estimate. Just as important, however, is a detailed plan for how to spend these resources, in the form of the Commission's work plan describing its annual workload and intended results. The work plan should be tied to staff (and contractor) time and work objectives (used for year-end evaluations of staff performance) for a realistic picture of what is possible to accomplish with given staffing resources. An excellent system to support work planning is in place at the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

ACTION: Undertake three-year strategic planning on an annual basis in support of annual work planning.

ACTION: Establish an annual work plan in concordance with an annual budget.

7.9 Evaluation

The Commission tracks and celebrates the heritage area's progress – to be measured in more ways than spending. Such intangibles as level of cooperation among partners and visitor satisfaction may also yield to measurement. The Commission is the "keeper of the flame," the organization that communicates the vision for the heritage area. It must monitor implementation of the plan that is designed to help the region achieve that vision and organize adjustments as circumstances and opportunities change.

7.9.1 Federal Evaluation in 2020

The Commission and the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area will undergo a major, independent evaluation by the National Park Service in 2020 (see 'Evaluation Requirements' below). Current thinking on the part of the national program offers these questions as the basis for the evaluation:

NFNHA's Evaluation Requirement in P.L. 110-229

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the National Heritage Area under this subtitle [2020] the Secretary shall—

(1) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and

(2) prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).

(b) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall—

(1) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(A) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the National Heritage Area; and

(B) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area;

(2) analyze the Federal, State, Tribal, and local, and private investments in the National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and

(3) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

(c) REPORT.—Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.

Source: P. L. 110-229, Subtitle B, Sec. 425

- Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
- What have been the impacts of investments made by federal, state, tribal, and local government and private entities?
- How do the heritage area's management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

The evaluation design employed in the first, experimental reviews for older heritage areas has also included these topics:

- Overarching goals for the National Heritage Area
- Resources and key partnerships available to help the National Heritage Area accomplish its goals;
- Activities and strategies that are being implemented to accomplish the goals;
- Intended short and long term outcomes; and
- The linkages among the activities, strategies, and outcomes.

7.9.2 Annual Evaluation

Evaluation, however, is an annual responsibility of the Commission, and should guide annual work plans, budgeting, communications, resource development, strategic planning, etc. Each program as it is designed and put into operation should include measurable objectives. Careful documentation of a program and its intended results permits an evaluation as to the success of the program. Long-term, this work will support the major federal evaluation expected for 2020.

ACTION: Establish measurable objectives at the time each program is designed and inaugurated, for annual review and documentation.

7.9.3 Meeting External Standards

Welcome to the world of charitable organizations. There is a wealth of information guidance to be had on the responsible operations of nonprofit organizations, the fiduciary responsibility of nonprofit boards, ethical fundraising, and much more. An excellent first-read guide is available through the New York Department of Law Charities Bureau, found at http://www.ag.ny.gov/publications/ Right%20from%20the%20Start%20 booklet%2009.pdf (accessed 12/29/2011). It includes a bibliography of websites and organizations that can provide in-depth advice. While it appears that there is not a set of standards of excellence specific to New York State (as there is in Maryland – see http://www.marylandnonprofits.org/dnn/), consider examining those standards that do exist. A good list is compiled by Independent Sector at http://independentsector.org/ compendium_of_standards (accessed 12/29/2011) and setting basic standards in the Commission's manual of operations.

ACTION: In setting up the parallel nonprofit organization and organizing the Commission's manual of operations, set basic standards of excellence and let partners, funders, and the public know such standards are part of the Commission's expectations for doing business.

7.10 Conclusion

Through the creation of this management plan, the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Commission has begun to establish strong the partnerships necessary to implement the plan. It has also identified financial and other resources and a process to pursue them in order to sustain its operations and support its partners. As stated earlier in this chapter, the Commission is not solely responsible for implementation; it will rely most of all on partnerships to execute major elements as conceived in this plan, beginning with the vision laid out in Chapter 1, *Concept & Approach*.

Table 7.1 Niagara Falls National Heritage Area – Partnership System Concept

	Partners														
Role/Function	**Commission**	**Parallel Nonprofit**	**Friends' Group**	**State Parks**	**NYPA**	**Bridge Commission**	**Niagara River Greenway**	**Economic Dev Entities**	**Tourism Entities**	**Academic Institutions**	**Tribal Gov'ts**	**Local Gov'ts**	**Interpretive Sites**	**Local Business**	**National Park Service**
Vision ("keeper of the flame")	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Measure, evaluate progress	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Heritage area's partnership development programs:															
Training	x	x						x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Networking events	x	x	x		x		x	x		x			x	x	
Promotion	x	x													
Technical assistance	x	x													x
Give small grants	x	x	x				x					x			
Public outreach	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
Advocacy	x	(x)	x				x	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Programs															
Interpretation	x	x		x	x		x		x	x	x		x	x	x
Marketing (promotion to potential visitors)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	
Digital presence (website/portal, social media, apps, Google Earth, etc.)	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Hospitality training	x	x		x				x	x	x			x	x	x
Wayfinding (maps) & promotion to visitors already here	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Wayfinding sign system	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
Trail development	x	x	x	x	x		x					x		x	

	Partners														
Role/Function	**Commission**	**Parallel Nonprofit**	**Friends' Group**	**State Parks**	**NYPA**	**Bridge Commission**	**Niagara River Greenway**	**Economic Dev Entities**	**Tourism Entities**	**Academic Institutions**	**Tribal Gov'ts**	**Local Gov'ts**	**Interpretive Sites**	**Local Business**	**National Park Service**
Interpretive Center	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Transportation	x	x		x		x		x				x		x	
K-12 education	x	x		x						x	x	x	x	x	x
Adult learning	x	x	x	x						x	x		x	x	x
Set quality standards for hospitality/visitor experience	x	x		x				x		x			x		
Relationship w/ NPS/NHA program for administrative needs	x														x
Manage federal funds	x	x													x
Fundraising for federal match	(x)	x	x							x	Δ	Δ	Δ		
Fundraising for programs beyond federal match	(x)	x	x							x	x	x		x	
SOURCE of (nonfederal) funds to help implement the plan (beyond their own projects)					x	x	x	x				x		x	

Δ If receiving National Heritage Area grant

Table 7.2 Implementation of High-priority Short-term Actions

Ref #	Page #	Description	Lead Organization	Estimated Timeframe Start (Yr-Mo)	Estimated Timeframe End (Yr-Mo)	Duration	Estimated Cost of Project	Funding Source*	Performance Goals
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation									
2-1	2-11	Interpretive Committee	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 seat interpretive committee
2-2	2-11	Phasing process	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	9 mos	na	A	By 7/13 organize phasing process
2-3	2-11	Plan review process	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	9 mos	na	A	By 7/13 organize plan review process
2-16	2-16	Family of publications	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Mar	6 mos	$25,000	B, C, E	By 3/13 print Phase 1 publications for 2013 season
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 2-17							
2-24	2-20	Orientation network	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	9 mos	include in 2-39		By 7/13 create plan for Phase 1 orientation network
2-26	2-20	Interim interpretive center	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	14-Apr	19 mos	$220,000	B, C, F, G	By 4/14 open interim interpretive center; estimate here does not include operating costs and ordinary improvements in years to follow
2-28	2-20	Orientation kiosks	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	14-Apr	19 mos	$50,000	B, C, F	By 4/14 install 5 initial kiosks
2-36	2-23	Program grants	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$40,000	B	By 9/13 implement second year of program grants using FY12 funds
2-39	2-25	Interpretive plan	Coordinating entity	13-Jan	13-Dec	12 mos	$180,000	B, C, F	By 12/13 complete interpretive plan
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 2-15, 2-31, 2-32, 2-34, 2-41 through 2-48							
2-40	2-25	Implement Ph 1 interp exhibits	Coordinating entity	14-Jan	15-Mar	15 mos	$1,500,000	B, C, F, G	By 3/15 install Phase 1 interpretive exhibits
2-49	2-54	Regional interpretive coalition	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	9 mos	na	A	By 7/13 initiate regional discussions
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience									
3-1	3-4	Branding and identity	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$30,000	A, B, E	By 9/13 complete branding and identity plan, undertake implementation into FY15 as needed
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 2-14, 3-2							
3-3	3-4	Stage 2 of Phase 1 website development/social media/mobile technology	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Mar	6 mos	$25,000	A, B	By 3/13 complete Phase 1, including Stage 1 costs supported by FY12 funds ($20,000 not shown in FY13-FY16 budget) and Stage 2 supported by FY13 funds ($25,000).
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 2-18, 2-20							
3-24	3-16	Shuttle service	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	14-Apr	19 mos	tbd	X	By 4/14 initiate Phase 1 shuttle plan, using grant funds (not projected in FY13-16 budget; this would be an additional cost supported by grant funds outside the current funding projections).
3-26	3-17	Trail system	State Parks	ongoing			tbd	D, E, F	Installation of phased trail improvements
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 4-14							
3-33	3-20	Marketing messages	NTCC	12-Oct	13-Mar	6 mos	na	D	By 3/13 publish 2013 marketing materials

Table 7.2 Implementation of High-priority Short-term Actions

Ref #	Page #	Description	Lead Organization	Estimated Timeframe Start (Yr-Mo)	Estimated Timeframe End (Yr-Mo)	Duration	Estimated Cost of Project	Funding Source*	Performance Goals
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 3-34							
3-38	3-21	Marketing partnership	NTCC	12-Oct	13-Mar	6 mos	na	D, E	By 3/13 partners initiate 2013 marketing
3-40	3-23	Measurement indicators	NTCC	12-Oct	13-Mar	6 mos	na	D, E	By 3/13 identify measurement indicators
3-41	3-23	Baseline data	NTCC	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$47,000	B	By 9/13 collect baseline data (FY12 funds); an ongoing task is to collect data for comparison to the baseline.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement									
4-26	4-17	School programs	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	9 mos	na	A, E, I	By 7/13 develop initial recommendations
4-29	4-17	History programs	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	include in 2-36	A, E, I	15 programs conducted thru 9/13
4-30	4-17	Nature programs	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	include in 2-36	A, E, I	15 programs conducted thru 9/13
4-34	4-20	Junior Ranger Program	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$5,000	A, B, I	300 children participating thru 9/13
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Stewardship									
5-1	5-4	County preservation coalition	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 6/13 initiate coalition and meeting quarterly
5-2	5-4	Preservation Buffalo Niagara	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 6/13 programmatic agreement w PBN
5-3	5-5	Greenway Commission	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 6/13 regular coordination w Greenway Comm.
5-46	5-28	Alliance of National Heritage Areas	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	$2,000	A, B	By 1/13 support ANHA and engage partners
5-47	5-28	National Trust	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 6/13 regular coordination w NTHP
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization									
6-8	6-9	Communities working group	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 6/13 regular coordination and meetings
6-10	6-9	Preservation Buffalo Niagara, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	12 mos	na	A	By 9/13 initiate discussion w PBN & ECNHC
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan									
7-1	7-4	Organize agendas	Coordinating entity	ongoing			na	A	Organization of agendas around plan topics
7-2	7-6	Standing committees	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 organize standing committees
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 7-3, 7-4, 7-5, 7-8, 7-9, 7-33							
7-7	7-9	Letters of endorsement	Coordinating entity	ongoing			na	A	Obtain letters from all key partners
7-10	7-11	NPS interpretive services	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 request technical assistance from NPS
7-12	7-11	MOU w NPS	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jul	10 mos	na	A	By 7/13 finalize memorandum of understanding
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 7-13							
7-30	7-20	Partner development	Coordinating entity	ongoing	13-Jun	9 mos	na	A	Ongoing relations / by 6/13 formalize program
		Supporting actions concurrently implemented: 7-16, 7-30, 7-22, 7-23, 7-24, 7-27							

Table 7.2 Implementation of High-priority Short-term Actions

Ref #	Page #	Description	Lead Organization	Estimated Timeframe Start (Yr-Mo)	Estimated Timeframe End (Yr-Mo)	Duration	Estimated Cost of Project	Funding Source*	Performance Goals
7-31	7-20	Partnership grants	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$30,000	B, C	By 9/13 raise funds for 2013/14 grants
7-32	7-21	Ph 1 communications plan	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Sep	12 mos	$25,000	B, E	By 9/13 complete Phase 1 communications plan
7-36	7-24	Ph 1 development plan	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	9 mos	$50,000	B, C, E	By 6/13 establish 3 year development plan
7-37	7-26	Staffing plan	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jun	9 mos	na	A	By 6/13 establish 3-year staffing plan
7-39	7-28	Financial mgmt system	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	$1,000	A, B	By 1/13 establish computer system & train staff
7-40	7-28	Financial procedures	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 establish financial procedures
7-41	7-29	3-year strategic work plan	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 establish 3-yr strategic work plan
7-42	7-29	Annual work plan	Coordinating entity	12-Oct	13-Jan	4 mos	na	A	By 1/13 establish annual work plan

* Project cost is for a single project over the duration shown, without regard to potential funding source's or sources' fiscal year(s); in the budgeting that follows this section, in many cases, these costs have been annualized or otherwise estimated in various ways to set up the four-year budget for which this work plan is a guide. It is not valid to sum or otherwise manipulate estimated costs here to reach any figures shown in the budget. Users should examine links, formulas, and assumptions carefully to understand how this work plan has formed the foundation of the estimated four-year budget that accompanies this worksheet, beginning with the worksheet entitled "General Expense Plan."

NFNHA Funding Sources for Phase 1 Projects

	Explanation
A	Cost of work item is to be covered primarily by administrative operating overhead of the NFNHA local coordinating entity as part of the annual work plan.
B[1]	Funding for the project is to be included as part of an annual appropriation request for National Heritage Areas submitted to the National Park Service.
C	Funding for the project is to be provided in part through fundraising efforts by the NFNHA local coordinating entity and its partners targeting corporate and/or individual donors.
D	Funding for the project is to be provided, all or in part, through an **existing** financial commitment made by an NFNHA partner agency or organization.
E	Funding for the project is to be provided, all or in part, through a **proposed** financial commitment made by an NFNHA partner agency or organization.
F[2]	Niagara River Greenway Commission Grants
G[3]	Western New York Regional Economic Development Council Consolidated Funding Application
H[4]	Certified Local Government grants
I[5]	National Park Foundation
X	Project funding from more than one grant source requiring preparation of detailed financial strategy.

[1] Program details for National Heritage Area annual appropriations

- *Administering organization:* National Park Service.
- *Project types* : Funds are potentially available for projects identified in the NFNHA management plan.
- *Eligible applicants* : Recognized local coordinating entities for active National Heritage Area programs.
- *Typical award amount* : $300,000 for multiple projects and administrative costs. (However, Public Law 110-229 states that annual funding requests cannot exceed $1 million and no more than $15 million total over the program period.)
- *Funding match requirements* : Public Law 110-229 requires that matching funds be provided by local coordinating entity and partner organizations/agencies; documentation of all matching funds from other sources should be included in the appropriation request.
- *Submittal deadline* : See National Heritage Area program requirements and Niagara Falls National Heritage Area administrative agreement with the NPS; anticipated every year until May 8, 2023.

[2] Program details for Niagara River Greenway Commission Grants

- *Project types* : Funds are available for …
- *Eligible applicants* : A municipal or non-profit organization partner located within the boundary of the Niagara River Greenway is needed to apply for this funding until non-profit status is achieved by the NFNHA local coordinating entity.
- *Typical award amount* :
- *Funding match requirements* :
- *Submittal deadline* : The third Tuesday of every other month starting in January of each year.

[3] Program details for New York State Regional Economic Development Council Consolidated Funding Applications

- *Project types* : The Consolidated Funding Application process is used to access grant resources currently available from multiple New York State agencies and authorities for community development, agricultural economic development, waterfront revitalization, energy improvements, environmental improvements, workforce development, direct assistance to businesses, and sustainability projects. Funds are potentially available for projects that are identified in the WNYREDC strategic plan.
- *Eligible applicants* : Local governments and non-profit organizations encouraging economic development and community revitalization located within the WNYREDC region.
- *Typical award amount* : The first round of grant funding for the new state program (2012) resulted in $100.3 million awarded to 96 projects in the five county area.
- *Funding match requirements* : Depends on program.
- *Submittal deadline* : January and July each year.

[4] Program details for Certified Local Government Grants

- *Project types* : Funds are available for historic preservation planning projects including the identification, evaluation, nomination, and protection (excluding design and construction projects) of cultural resources in a community
- *Eligible applicants* : At the time this management plan was produced the City of Niagara Falls and the Village of Lewiston were eligible Certified Local Governments.
- *Typical award amount* : $5,000 to $15,000 range.
- *Funding match requirements* : Communities are encouraged to contribute funds or in-kind services equaling at least 40% of the total project cost.
- *Submittal deadline* : mid-July of each year.

[5] Program details for National Park Foundation Grants

- *Administering organization:* National Park Foundation

Project types : National Park System units, affiliated areas, regional, service and program offices, National Heritage Areas, National Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Historic Landmarks and National Trails

- *Eligible applicants* : small parks
- *Typical award amount* : up to $10,000
- *Funding match requirements* : None
- *Submittal deadline* : Ongoing
- *Website* : http://www.nationalparks.org

Note: Although applications must be submitted by a National Park Service staff person, successful parks may direct a grant to a partner organization for a collaborative project.

Additional Funding Sources for Further Investigation

Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo – 21st Century Fund Grants
Administering organization: Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo

Project types: to support a high-impact project. Projects vary greatly, ranging from architectural restoration to the creation of urban farms. The 21st Century Fund is a special funding opportunity designed to support one high impact project every other year that is of strategic importance to Western New York. The Fund offers its members a unique opportunity to learn about key community issues and engage in a democratic, and participatory decision making process whereby each voting member of a broad, diverse, intergenerational membership has one vote to select the successful project. Through this process the organization hopes to develop a spirit of charitable giving among a new generation of leaders, encourage intergenerational philanthropy, and develop and enhance a spirit of mutual problem solving by members of our community.

- *Eligible applicants*: nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations
- *Typical award amount*: $100,000
- *Funding match requirements*: None

Submittal deadline: RFP announced: July
First applicant briefing session: September
Second applicant briefing session: October
Electronic applications received by: December
Selection of semi-finalists: January
Vote and winner announcement: February

- *Website*: http://www.cfgb.org/for-nonprofits/for-grant-seekers/21st-century-fund-grants/

Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo – Competitive Grants
Administering organization: Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo
Project types: Enhancing and leveraging significant natural, historic and architectural resources; Improving the region as a center for arts and culture

- *Eligible applicants*: nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations operating within the eight counties of Western New York
- *Typical award amount*: Not stated
- *Funding match requirements*: Not stated

Submittal deadline: Letter of Intent RFP posted online: January 1
Letter of Intent submissions due: February 1 (submissions must be sent electronically through this website)
Selected organizations notified to submit full applications: March 5
Briefing for those invited to submit a full application: March 7 at 10:00 a.m.
Selected organizations full applications due: April 2
Funding decisions announced: May
Website: http://www.cfgb.org/for-nonprofits/for-grant-seekers/community-foundation-grants

Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo – Niagara Area Foundation Grants
Administering organization: Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo

- *Project types*: committed to supporting programs that will have maximum positive impact on Niagara County in the following categories: Health; Human services; Arts; Civic needs; Community development; Education; Environment. Preference will be given to grant applications that have the greatest impact on positive youth development and demonstrate collaboration with other organizations.

Eligible applicants: nonprofit 501(c)3 organizations operating within the eight counties of Western New York

- *Typical award amount*: $10,000
- *Funding match requirements*: None

Submittal deadline: RFP posted online: September 14, 2012
Application Deadline: October 15, 2012
Notification to applicants: December 14, 2012
Website: http://www.cfgb.org/for-nonprofits/for-grant-seekers/niagara-area-foundation-grants/

Note for the three grant programs for the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo described here: If invited to submit a full application for funding, arts and cultural organizations will be required to complete a Data Profile through the New York State Cultural Data Project (New York State CDP; www.nysculturaldata.org) and submit it to the Foundation for review.

J. Paul Getty Trust

- *Administering organization:* J. Paul Getty Trust
- *Project types* : Conservation- art and heritage
- *Eligible applicants* : The Getty Foundation supports individuals and institutions committed to advancing the understanding and preservation of the visual arts locally and throughout the world. The majority of our funding is through initiatives that target a particular issue or region, and that are carried out in collaboration with the other Getty programs–the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, and the Getty Conservation Institute.
- *Typical award amount* : $1,000- $230,000
- *Funding match requirements* : None
- *Submittal deadline* : Ongoing

Website : http://www.getty.edu/

John R. Oishei Foundation

- *Administering organization:* John R. Oishei Foundation

- *Project types* : "issues-based" funding: Strengthening Neighborhoods and Building Communities; Expanding the Impact of Regional Assets
- *Eligible applicants* : 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- *Typical award amount* : $1,000- $2,000,000
- *Funding match requirements* : Not stated
- *Submittal deadline* : Ongoing

Website : http://www.oisheifdt.org

Niagara Community Foundation

- *Administering organization:* Niagara Community Foundation

- *Project types* : Build community leadership; foster cooperative, collaborative and innovative approaches to community issues; address an identifiable community need; have an impact across the region; leverage other funds; show evidence of sustainability (if appropriate to the project)
- *Eligible applicants* : charities or by municipalities working in collaboration with not-for-profit organizations
- *Typical award amount* : $500- $50,000
- *Funding match requirements* : Not stated
- *Submittal deadline* : Ongoing

Website : http://www.niagaracommunityfoundation.org/

Western New York Foundation

- *Administering organization:* Western New York Foundation
- *Project types* : Education; Urban and Rural Development; Arts, Culture, and Humanities;

Housing, Park and Land Use

- *Eligible applicants* : 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- *Typical award amount* : $500-$50,000
- *Funding match requirements* : Not stated
- *Submittal deadline* : November 30th and June 30th

Website : http://www.wnyfoundation.org/

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2.2.1 Implement a Heritage Area-wide Interpretive Presentation						
2(1)	2-11	Create an Interpretive Committee to guide heritage area interpretive initiatives.			• Creation of an Interpretive Committee	Coordinating entity
2(2)	2-11	Organize and implement a process for identifying, prioritizing, and phasing of heritage area interpretive projects in accordance with the comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Organization of process • Implementation of Phase 1 from Action 2(1) above	Coordinating entity and partners involved in specific projects
2(3)	2-11	Organize and implement a process for the preparation and review of implementation plans for interpretive projects being undertaken with heritage area organization, funding, or support.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Organization of process • Implementation of Phase 1 from Action 2(1) above • Implementation and review of phases and projects as they are undertaken	Coordinating entity and partners involved in specific projects
2(4)	2-11	Develop and adopt criteria for interpretation quality standards program as discussed in Chapter 3 to include interpretation with benefits such as the availability of grants and technical assistance.			• Completion and adoption of quality standards – see Ch 3, Section 3.3, page 3-5.	Coordinating entity
2.2.2 Research and Documentation						
2(5)	2-13	Consult with existing regional archives on an approach for creating and supporting a central single archive on the history and culture of Niagara Falls and the lower river as well as a network of regional archives working in collaboration.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Initial consultations • Development of an approach	Task force of partners appointed by coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(6)	2-13		Collaborate with the Niagara Falls Public Library in preparing and implementing a plan to support the library as a central archive and repository for historical information and collections on the Niagara Falls region.		• Preparation of plan • Implementation of plan	Task force of partners appointed by coordinating entity; Niagara Falls Public Library
2(7)	2-13		Create a network of regional archives at existing libraries, historical societies, and other sites. Outline the roles that existing archives are willing and capable of playing in the vision for a collaborative regional archival network.	Ongoing	• Identification of potential partners • Consultations • Outline of vision and roles • Ongoing implementation of vision	Task force to be created by coordinating entity; Regional partners with archives
2(8)	2-13		Undertake mutually agreed-upon actions to strengthen and support the network of regional archives including such projects as completing an inventory and review of documents, processes for care of archives, creating bibliography and summary of documents, and making archives accessible, including posting of information online.	Ongoing	• Identification of priority needs • Phased implementation of agreed-upon actions	Coordinating entity and Network of regional archives
2(9)	2-13		Work with the board and planners of the Niagara Experience Center on its possible role as a central archival resource working in collaboration with the regional archival network.	Ongoing	• Ongoing consultation and communication with NEC board • Coordination and support when appropriate	Coordinating entity NEC Board Network of regional archives

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(10)	2-13	Establish a Committee of Historians to advise the heritage area on historical subjects and issues related to research.			• Establishment a Committee of Historians	Coordinating entity
2(11)	2-14	Develop or adopt a research protocol to guide historians undertaking research on behalf of the heritage area and its partners.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Adoption of a protocol • Publication on website of other medium • Periodic review and update	Committee of Historians and associated partners
2(12)	2-14	Develop and implement a coordinated, long term program of research into the history of the Niagara Falls region through a collaboration of partnering organizations. Organize, coordinate, and support research by professional historians, local avocational historians, and students.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan		Committee of Historians and associated partners
2(13)	2-14		As part of a broader communications plan, encourage the publication of new books and articles on Niagara Falls history.	Annual work plan	• Ongoing communication with partners on planned publications • Yearly identification of actions	Coordinating entity; Committee of Historians; Partners
2.2.3 Heritage Area Identity						
2(14)	2-15	Incorporate interpretive elements such as exhibit carriers, kiosks, identity signage, wayfinding signage and graphic formats in the family of items that are part of the heritage area identity and brand. Develop design guidelines and guidelines for usage for a family of exhibit carriers, kiosks, signage types, and graphic formats for use throughout the heritage area.			• Prepare design guidelines for interpretive elements	Coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(15)	2-15	Use the heritage area's identity and design elements to convey the level of quality that can be expected from heritage area interpretive presentations.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing monitoring and review of interpretive projects	Interpretive Committee
2.2.4 Heritage Area Publications						
2(16)	2-16	Create a family of coordinated interpretive publications to support presentation of the heritage area's interpretive themes and stories to visitors. The family of publications may include a variety of media and graphic formats and should be introduced over time beginning with the publications that will be most useful to visitors.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Identify family of publications to be developed along with phasing • Implement Phase 1 publications • Ongoing development and upgrading based on communications plan	Coordinating entity with input from partners
2(17)	2-16	Coordinate the family of interpretive publications with those of partnering sites and organizations that interpret heritage area themes.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing coordination with partners and inclusion in communications plan	Coordinating entity with partners
2.2.5 Heritage Area Media Experience						
2(18)	2-18	Create a heritage area website to present the Niagara Falls story as represented through its interpretive themes and to encourage visitors to explore when they come.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Completion of a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area website • Inclusion of interpretive content on website • Ongoing development and upgrading of interpretive content	Coordinating entity; partners to provide mutual linkages and assist in interpretive content

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(19)	2-18	Create a heritage area media experience as a virtual/interactive museum and information center. A cyberspace version of the Niagara Experience Center, the state-of-the-art media experience should present the heritage area, its resources, and its opportunities in a variety of user friendly media formats. Use the media experience to provide detailed information that will facilitate orientation and exploration, including maps, tours, guides, and interpretive content.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Inclusion of maps, tours, guides, etc. • Ongoing development and upgrading of materials to encourage exploration	Coordinating entity and partners
2(20)	2-18	Coordinate content and use of the new heritage area website and media with that of the National Park Service website so that the two complement and are consistent with each other.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Coordination of websites • Ongoing updates	Coordinating entity, National Park Service
2(21)	2-18	Create podcasts and audio and video tours that can be downloaded from the website and other media formats.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial development of selected audio tours • Ongoing development and upgrading of new and existing tours	Coordinating entity and partners
2(22)	2-18	Develop creative, fun, and user friendly smartphone and social media applications to provide a wide range of information and interpretive content for visitors.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial development of application • Ongoing development and upgrade of new and existing apps • Ongoing technological evolution of apps and media expected	Coordinating entity and partners

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(23)	2-18	Use the heritage area website and media formats to provide access to articles, research papers, historic maps, and photographs for use by students and others seeking detailed information about Niagara Falls, its history, and its landscape.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Initial inclusion of historical materials on website • Ongoing development and upgrading	Coordinating entity and partners
2.2.6 Interpretive Center and Orientation						
2(24)	2-20	Create a network of facilities introducing visitors to heritage area themes and stories and orienting them toward interpretive opportunities within the heritage area's landscapes and communities.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Development of concept plan for facilities with phasing over time • Annual implementation and updating of phasing plan	Coordinating entity with partners hosting orientation facilities
2(25)	2-20	Collaborate with partners in developing a primary Interpretive Center adjacent to Niagara Falls State Park to attract visitors and encourage them to explore the river corridor. Over the long term, work to develop the Niagara Experience Center as the primary interpretive center.			• Opening of an interim Interpretive Center	Coordinating entity; USA Niagara; Niagara USA (NTCC) City of Niagara Falls
2(26)	2-20	In the interim, a smaller Interpretive Center should be created in the vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard.		Over the long term, work to develop the Niagara Experience Center as the primary interpretive center.	• Ongoing support of the NEC by coordinating entity • Opening of the NEC	Niagara Experience Center; City of Niagara Falls; coordinating entity support
2(27)	2-20		Working with community partners, establish orientation centers in Lewiston and Youngstown presenting the heritage area, introducing interpretive themes, and orienting visitors to interpretive opportunities.		• Interim orientation exhibits in accordance with phasing of Action 2(24) and 2(28) • Opening orientation centers in Lewiston and Youngstown in existing or new facilities	Coordinating entity with Lewiston and Youngstown

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(28)	2-20	Create outdoor orientation exhibits or kiosks at key locations along the river corridor presenting the heritage area, introducing its themes, and orienting visitors to interpretive opportunities.	Annual work plan		• Phased installation of outdoor orientation exhibits	Coordinating entity with partners
2.2.7 Interpretive Guides and Living History						
2(29)	2-21	Create a Certified Guides Program of qualified individuals who can serve as guides to the heritage area and provide high quality interpretation in a variety of formats for visitors. Develop background materials, a certification process, and ongoing quality control measures to assure the level of quality desired	Annual work plan	Ongoing	• Develop background materials, certification process and phasing for implementation • Phased implementation • Yearly quality control review and adjustments	Coordinating entity with NTCC and interpretive partners
2(30)	2-21		Work with partnering organizations to create a qualified troupe of Living History Interpreters representing heritage area themes and stories and who can perform and animate sites and locations throughout the heritage area. Develop background materials, costume support, a certification process, and ongoing quality control measures to assure the level of quality desired.	Ongoing	• Consult with partners presenting living history on a potential program • Provide ongoing support to partners presenting living history • Identify groups interested in offering living history • Develop and implement phased program over time	Interpretive Committee; Interpretive partners presenting living history
2.2.8 Public Art						
2(31)	2-22	Use public art to convey interpretive content in heritage area landscape presentations to the maximum extent possible.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing inclusion of public art in interpretive projects	Interpretive Committee; Niagara Arts and Cultural Center; Interpretive partners

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(32)	2-22	As a component of the heritage area's brand and identity, design guidelines for the family of exhibit carriers, kiosks, and signage types should have a high level of design quality conveying a sense of public art throughout the heritage area.			• Prepare design guidelines for interpretive elements – see Action 2(14) above	Coordinating entity
2(33)	2-22	Prepare a comprehensive plan outlining opportunities for public art allowing for targeting of projects and attraction of artists. Include public art in interpretive plans prepared for exhibit presentations.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Preparation of public art plan. • Ongoing inclusion of public art in interpretive projects	Interpretive Committee; Niagara Arts & Cultural Center; Interpretive partners
2(34)	2-23	Use public art as 'placemakers' within the landscape to support interpretation and help visitors visualize the location, extent, and character of landscape features that no longer exist.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing inclusion of public art in interpretive projects	Interpretive Committee; Niagara Arts and Cultural Center; Interpretive partners
2(35)	2-23	Support community initiatives for public art as community enhancements beyond the heritage area's interpretive goals.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing inclusion of public art in interpretive projects	Interpretive Committee; Niagara Arts and Cultural Center; Interpretive partners
2.2.9 Programming and Events						
2(36)	2-23	Support interpretive programming offered by partnering communities and sites through a competitive interpretive programming and events matching grant program. Use the grants program to encourage and support high standards of quality.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Create grants program for interpretive programming and events • Ongoing development and administration of grants program	Coordinating entity; Interpretive Committee

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(37)	2-23	Work with partnering communities and sites to coordinate a heritage area-wide calendar of events that creates synergism, limits undesired competition, and encourages exploration and visitation.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Identify initial calendar of events • Ongoing collaboration with partners to coordinate	Task force created by coordinating entity Niagara USA (NTCC) Partnering heritage area communities and sites
2(38)	2-23	Collaborate with regional partners to coordinate and promote events for visitors in Niagara & Erie Counties based upon heritage area themes.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Identify initial calendar of events • Ongoing collaboration with partners to coordinate	Niagara USA (NTCC) Buffalo Niagara CVB Partnering regional communities and sites
2.3 Heritage Area Interpretive Plan						
2(39)	2-25	Develop a comprehensive heritage area interpretive plan that identifies the best places and means by which to tell each story and details how phased implementation. The stories will be woven together to create a unified approach to interpretation.				
2(40)	2-25	Interpret the heritage area themes through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming as identified in the comprehensive interpretive plan, creating a world class visitor experience and enhancing landscape and community character.				
2.3.1 Natural Phenomenon						
2(41)	2-27	Interpret the heritage area theme Natural Phenomenon through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification/implementation of early action projects • Preparation/ implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2.3.2 Tourism and Recreation						
2(42)	2-31	Interpret the heritage area theme Tourism and Recreation through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners. • Identification and implementation of early action projects. • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.3.3 Power and Industry						
2(43)	2-34	Interpret the heritage area theme Power and Industry through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.3.5 Borderland: The Western Door						
2(44)	2-39	Interpret the heritage area theme Power and Industry through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2.3.6 Borderland: Clash of Empires						
2(45)	2-42	Interpret the heritage area storyline Clash of Empires through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.3.7 Borderland: Revolutionary Frontier						
2(46)	2-45	Interpret the heritage area storyline Clash of Empires through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.3.8 Borderland: War of 1812						
2(47)	2-48	Interpret the heritage area War of 1812 storyline through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2.3.9 Borderland: Underground Railroad						
2(48)	2-50	Interpret the heritage area storyline Underground Railroad through high quality exhibits, artwork, and programming in a manner that creates a world class visitor experience and enhances landscape and community character.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of early action projects • Preparation and implementation of a phased interpretive plan for this theme	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.4 Regional Collaboration						
2(49)	2-54	Create a regional interpretive collaboration that encourages participation by a wide variety of potential partners, including regional organizations, interpretive sites, Tribal governments, municipalities, historical societies and organizations, libraries, and others.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Initial consultations with partners • Identification and implementation of projects	Coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
2.4.1 Regional, National, and Bi-national Collaboration						
2(50)	2-55	Promote the concept of a Niagara Region that includes both the US and Canadian sides of the Niagara River by presenting a regional interpretive context and by drawing interpretive connections between thematically related sites on both sides.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing regional communication and collaboration	Coordinating entity with Niagara Parks coordinating entity, Canada and other regional and local partners
2(51)	2-56	Coordinate with and support the Niagara River Greenway by working with partners to implement its trail system and interpretive vision within the boundaries of the National Heritage Area.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Phased implementation of trail system • Phased implementation of interpretive plan involving trail system	Coordinating entity; NY State Parks; Niagara River Greenway coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(52)	2-56	Actively support and promote top-priority projects that implement the vision and program outlined in the Niagara River Greenway Plan.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Phased implementation of interpretive plan and related projects involving trail system	Coordinating entity; NY State Parks; Niagara River Greenway coordinating entity; Related partners
2(53)	2-57	Work with the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor on communicating the heritage area concept to residents of Niagara and Erie Counties. Work with other state and national heritage areas state-wide on issues of common concern.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing collaboration and incorporation into communications plan	Coordinating entity; Erie Canalway NHA
2(54)	2-57	Coordinate Niagara Falls and Erie Canalway heritage area-wide interpretive presentations and local interpretive presentations around themes of common interest.	Annual work plan	Ongoing	• Identify Canalway partners wishing to participate in NHA program • Consult with Canalway and Canalway partners on coordinating interpretive presentations • Implement phased and coordinated interpretive program over time	Interpretive Committee; Task force of regional Canalway interpretive partners Erie Canalway NHA
2(55)	2-58	Support goals, policies, and programs of the Great Lakes Seaway Trail through implementation of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area management plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing phased implementation of management plan • Ongoing communication with Seaway Trail	Coordinating entity and interpretive partners
2(56)	2-58	Present the unified national heritage area as a single destination and visitor experience along the Great Lakes Seaway Trail.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Presentation of NHA in Seaway Trail publications and media	Seaway Trail

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(57)	2-58	Support New York State Park's study and rehabilitation of the Olmsted-inspired landscape of the historic Niagara Reservation.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing support for NY State Parks landscape rehabilitation	Coordinating entity in support of NY State Parks
2(58)	2-58	Collaborate with the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy on regional interpretation and programming on Olmsted's vision and work.	Annual work plan	Ongoing	• Initial consultation on potential for regional interpretation • Development of phased plan for regional interpretation • Phased implementation of plan	Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy; NY State Parks; coordinating entity; Regional partners
2(59)	2-59	Use interpretive themes as a means of presenting the Niagara Region to potential visitors and linking communities, sites, and interpretive opportunities at a regional scale.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing coordination between developing interpretive presentations and regional marketing and promotion	Niagara USA (NTCC); Buffalo Niagara CVB
2(60)	2-59	Partner with the Niagara Wine Trail as a primary tourism itinerary within the region in presenting the story of agriculture and the landscape in conjunction with the theme 'Natural Phenomenon.'	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing coordination between developing interpretive presentations and regional marketing and promotion	Niagara USA (NTCC); winery representatives
2.4.2 Thematic Partners						
2(61)	2-60	Develop an ongoing process through which additional sites in Niagara and Erie Counties that could collaborate with the presentation of each heritage area theme on a regional basis may be identified.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Complete review of potential sites • Develop phasing priorities for regional thematic program • Ongoing review and update of priorities and potential sites	Interpretive Committee

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 2 • Niagara's Interpretive Presentation						
2(62)	2-60	Within that process, create a procedure through which interested thematically related interpretive sites in Niagara and Erie Counties can apply to participate in the heritage area program, including appropriate criteria, requirements, and guidelines.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Develop an application process with requirements, and guidelines • Ongoing phased implementation of procedure over time	Interpretive Committee
2(63)	2-61	As part of the heritage area's interpretation of each theme, include presentation of the regional context including participating interpretive sites.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Ongoing inclusion of regional context in heritage area interpretation	Interpretive Committee
2(64)	2-61		Implement regional interpretive initiatives for the most promising themes and subjects in collaboration with regional partners.	Annual work plan	• Identify and prioritize interpretive themes and subjects • Develop a phased plan for implementation • Ongoing update and implementation	Interpretive Committee; Regional interpretive sites

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3.2 Image: Tourism Branding and Messaging						
3(1)	3-4	Brand and position the heritage area by completing the logo design for the National Heritage Area and an accompanying messaging strategy; and ensuring correct and accurate usage of the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area brand at different scales, in different formats, and for different uses by local partners.			• Completion of logo and messaging strategy • Completion of style manual for use of logo/brand • Quality of experience in providing guidance to partners • Encourage partners' collaboration and ensure accurate usage	Coordinating entity; partners to observe style manual
3(2)	3-4	Create icons graphically related to the logo that represent the National Heritage Area's four interpretive themes in order to support wayfinding and help establish the heritage area's physical presence.			• Development of icons • Incorporation of icons into online and print materials produced by the National Heritage Area and other partners	Coordinating entity; partners to follow suit
3(3)	3-4	Create an independent website for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area that reflects the brand and messaging.			• Completion of a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area website • Number of unique visitors on a monthly and annual basis	Coordinating entity; partners to provide mutual linkages
3(4)	3-5	Take advantage of trends in social media, creating a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Yelp,			• Active involvements in social media applications	Coordinating entity; partners to follow suit
3(5)	3-5	Evaluate the use of Facebook's feature allowing "fans" to self-identify as a first step or an element of support in developing a following of "friends" of the National Heritage Area.			• Number of Facebook fans	Coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3(6)	3-5		Present participating attractions and tourism services in the heritage area as a unified regional tourism product.		• Enhanced visibility for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area in NTCC online and print marketing materials	NTCC; coordinating entity to find ways to assist
3(7)	3-5			Develop a seasonal guide to the National Heritage Area using the NPS newsletter format.	• Completion of seasonal guide and tracking of the number of guides printed and disseminated annually	Coordinating entity
3.3 Quality Standards for Attractions, Events, and Visitor Services						
3(8)	3-7	Develop and adopt criteria for a two-level National Heritage Area quality standards program to designate attractions, events and visitor services.			• Completion and adoption of quality standards	Coordinating entity
3(9)	3-7		Invite attractions, events, and visitor services to apply to participate in the quality standards program.		• Number of attractions, events, and visitor services actively participating in the quality standards program at the "Partner" and "Signature" levels • Number of active participants in the program each year	Coordinating entity; applicants
3(10)	3-7	Monitor the status of attractions, events, and visitor services that have been designated at the Partner and Signature levels.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Completion of reevaluation reports for participating attractions, events, and visitor services	Coordinating entity; Partner and Signature attractions, events, and visitor services
3(11)	3-7		Offer visitor readiness assessments.	Ongoing	• Number of completed visitor readiness assessments	Coordinating entity; as appropriate, NPS, NTCC, NU and others; Partner and Signature attractions, events, and visitor services

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3.4 Wayfinding						
3(12)	3-8	Develop walking, biking, and driving tours with maps to show different routes throughout the National Heritage Area.			• Completion of walking and driving tours • Number of tours printed/ downloaded annually	Partners (communities, attractions)
3(13)	3-8	Create a detailed map and guide to trails along the Niagara River.			• Completion of a map and guide • Number printed/downloaded annually	Coordinating entity, in cooperation with NY State Parks
3(14)	3-8		Develop a fold-out, four-color map brochure for the National Heritage Area that includes walking and driving tours and additional interpretive information about attractions.		• Completion of Niagara Falls National Heritage Area brochure • Number of brochures printed and disseminated annually	Coordinating entity
3(15)	3-8		Tap into GPS technology and smart phone applications to provide electronic and online wayfinding tools and multi-platform content.		• Completion of electronic and online wayfinding tools • Number downloaded or used annually	Coordinating entity
3(16)	3-9	Advocate for consistency among wayfinding programs currently under development (in the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, NY State Parks, and Lewiston); seek to include linkages to attractions and destinations outside of those jurisdictions.			• Complete research and outreach on existing wayfinding programs	Coordinating entity and partners; Western New York economic development agencies; Niagara County, NYSDOT
3(17)	3-9		Work with attractions and communities to provide a seamless and coordinated system of wayfinding throughout the National Heritage Area.	Ongoing	• Complete wayfinding plan • Creation and installation of wayfinding signage and development of complementary online and print materials	Coordinating entity and partners; Western New York economic development agencies; Niagara County, NYSDOT

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3.5 Hospitality Training						
3(18)	3-12		Develop an umbrella hospitality training and retention program designed to provide additional training to existing staff and volunteers and cultivate an expanded pool of trained volunteers.		• Quality of experience in design and test of curriculum and program • Establishment of a schedule of training once piloting is complete • Number of participants who successfully complete training • Number of years of active participation by individual guides. • Number of refresher training workshops or events offered and • Number of participants at each workshop/event	NU, NTCC, NPS; coordinating entity and others as appropriate; Partner and Signature attractions, events, and visitor services
3.6 Packaging Attractions						
3(19)	3-13	Conduct a study and develop a business plan to determine the feasibility of one or more regional passes that combine the attractions featured in the Discovery Pass along with other attractions on the American side of the Falls.	Field testing		• Completion of market research, a feasibility study, and a business plan for a regional heritage area pass • Completion of field testing for regional heritage area pass	Coordinating entity, NTCC, BNCVB, Western New York economic development agencies, Partner and Signature attractions
3(20)	3-13			If the regional pass concept is found to be feasible, launch the pass as a multi-day alternative to the Discovery Pass to encourage longer stays on the American side of Niagara Falls.	• Number of distributors for the regional pass • Number of regional passes sold annually • Revenues generated by regional pass sales	Coordinating entity, NTCC, BNCVB, Western New York economic development agencies, Partner and Signature attractions

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3(21)	3-14		Work with partners to create packages and itineraries that combine attractions within the heritage area to appeal to heritage travelers.		• Number of packages and itineraries created • Number of travelers booking the packages and/or using the suggested itineraries	Coordinating entity, NTCC, BNCVB, Western New York economic development agencies, Partner and Signature attractions
3(22)	3-14		Encourage the development of small businesses to enhance the visitor experience.		• Number of new small businesses created • Number of jobs created	Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, government agencies
3(23)	3-14			Work with partners to provide "cultural concierge" services to help create customized packages and itineraries for National Heritage Area travelers.	• Number of hours of "cultural concierge" services provided • Number of customers served by cultural concierges	NTCC, BNCVB, Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, Partner and Signature attractions and visitor services
3.7 Transportation Options						
3(24)	3-16	Work with partners to explore the potential for a public-private partnership to create a high-quality, affordable shuttle service for the Niagara River corridor.			• Completion of feasibility study for public-private partnership for a shuttle service serving the Niagara River valley	City of Niagara Falls, NTCC, Niagara County, Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, NFTA, NU, Niagara Falls State Park, NYPA, private tour operators.
3(25)	3-16		If a public-private partnership is found to be feasible, implement the partnership to create a seasonal shuttle service and promote the shuttle's availability.		• Number of shuttle tickets sold tracked monthly and annually • Number of shuttle riders • (Long-term) Shuttle enhancements developed, considering additional specific indicators for each enhancement as appropriate	Same as above

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3(26)	3-17	Encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system and amenities along the Niagara River Gorge.			• Completion of a continuous hiking and biking trail along the length of the Niagara River gorge • Number of new bike racks available along the bike trails in the heritage area	NYS OPRHP, Niagara River Greenway Commission, Artpark, NYPA, City of Niagara Falls, Village of Lewiston, Town of Lewiston, Town of Porter, Village of Youngstown, Old Fort Niagara, coordinating entity
3(27)	3-17		Encourage the availability of bike rental services.		• Number of bike rental services in the heritage area • Number of bicycles available for rent • Collaboration between bike rental locations	Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, government agencies and jurisdictions as appropriate
3(28)	3-17		Work with facilities and services throughout the area to help make them hiker and biker ready.		• Number of facilities and services engaged in a program to become hiker and biker ready. • Anecdotal evidence of design and program changes employed by facilities and services to make them hiker and biker ready	Business owners, bicycling and hiking groups, recreation and parks experts, government agencies and jurisdictions as appropriate
3(29)	3-18		Encourage the development of businesses offering alternative transportation modes.		• Number of new alternative transportation businesses created in the heritage area • Number of new jobs created	Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, government agencies and jurisdictions as appropriate
3(30)	3-18		Develop a Niagara Falls National Heritage Area Interpretive Center as a multi-modal transportation hub.		• Identification of an appropriate location in Niagara Falls to serve as the heritage area Interpretive Center to serve as the multi-modal transportation hub • Establishment of such a site	Niagara Falls Experience Center, Inc., NTCC, Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, City of Niagara Falls, and others as appropriate

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3.8 Visitor Orientation						
3(31)	3-19		Establish orientation centers for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area at existing sites in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown.		• Identification of heritage area orientation center sites • Establishment of a heritage area presence at each site	NTCC, Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, Western New York economic development agencies, coordinating entity, villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, Partner and Signature attractions as appropriate
3(32)	3-19		Establish orientation centers for the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area at existing sites in Niagara Falls, Lewiston, and Youngstown.		• Number of new tourism-friendly businesses created near orientation center • Number of jobs created	Western NY economic development agency, Chambers of Commerce, municipalities, coordinating entity
3.9 Tourism Marketing Partnerships						
3(33)	3-20	Work with the NTCC to adapt its marketing messages to appeal to the heritage tourism sector within its target audiences.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Visibility of heritage area in NTCC tourism marketing materials	NTCC; coordinating entity to find ways to assist
3(34)	3-20	Encourage the NTCC to add "heritage travelers" as an additional target market in its marketing plan.			• Marketing efforts completed to reach out to heritage travelers • Number heritage travelers reached • Number of travelers reached who visited the heritage area	Same as above
3(35)	3-21		Encourage joint heritage tourism marketing ventures between the NTCC and the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau to target cultural and heritage travelers and position Niagara Falls as a destination for longer visits.		• Completion of feasibility study for a regional pass • Development of a regional pass product if appropriate	Same as above

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified
Chapter 3 • Niagara's Visitor Experience						
3(36)	3-21	.		Cultivate regional marketing partnerships with Canada.	• Track regional marketing partnerships created	NTCC, BNCVB, coordinating entity
3(37)	3-21			Cultivate regional marketing partnerships with western New York.	• Track regional marketing partnerships created	Same as above
3(38)	3-21	Encourage creative marketing partnerships to bring together diverse partners within the heritage area.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Partnerships created • Indicators appropriate for each partnership effort	Coordinating entity, NTCC, BNCVB, Partner and Signature attractions, visitor services.
3(39)	3-21	Develop partnerships with tour operators to promote longer group tour experiences in the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area for targeted audiences.			• Number of tour operators offering longer tour offerings for travelers featuring heritage area attractions.	Tour operators, coordinating entity, NTCC, BNCVB, Partner and Signature attractions.
3.10 Evaluation						
3(40)	3-23	Collaborate with the NTCC to identify measurement indicators that are already being tracked that are relevant to the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Establishment of a data collection system and its use over time • Annual reports including indicators to demonstrate progress	Coordinating entity, NPS national office, NTCC, Western New York economic development agencies, Partner and Signature attractions, events, and visitor services.
3(41)	3-23	Collect baseline information and work with the NTCC on data collection and tracking change over time.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Collection of baseline data	Coordinating entity, NPS national office, NTCC
3(42)	3-23	Identify performance indicators to track the effectiveness of the National Heritage Area, ensuring that baseline data is collected for all measurement indicators that will be tracked over time.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Establishment and tracking of appropriate indicators as new programs are created	Coordinating entity, NTCC, Western NY economic development agency, Partner attractions, BNCVB

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4.2 Concept and Approach for Community Engagement						
4(1)	4-3	Incorporate five community engagement objectives into an overall communications plan: (1) a public presence for residents; (2) community education and outreach through arts and cultural programs and outdoor recreation; (3) community participation in research; (4) youth involvement and leadership development; and (5) outreach to schools.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Completion of annual work plans on a yearly basis • At least one threshold-level outcome each year in each of five objectives • At least one outstanding outcome from among the five objectives	Coordinating entity
4.3 Communication: Creating a Public Presence						
4(2)	4-4		Support partners in creating high-quality local history presentations and events designed specifically for residents.	Ongoing	• Number of local-history presentations and/or events designed specifically for residents • Number of presentations and/or events deemed high-quality based on community attendance levels and feedback obtained through exit surveys	Coordinating entity/traditional historical attractions, non-traditional presenters
4(3)	4-4	Address partners' needs for marketing support to reach local audiences for their programs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Dollars devoted to marketing support given to partners to reach local audiences; percentage of dollars provided to partners; percentage of budget overall • Community attendance at programs whose marketing is supported by the coordinating entity versus attendance at similar programs without coordinating entity support for marketing	Coordinating entity/NTCC, BNCVB; attractions

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(4)	4-4	Use the heritage area's website to promote partners' websites and feature partners' upcoming events and programs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of partners' websites linked to heritage area's website (links made by partners; links made by coordinating entity) • Number of individual events and programs offered by partners featured on heritage area website.	Coordinating entity/NTCC, BNCVB
4(5)	4-4	Market the heritage area's website to residents in order to support partners' marketing.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of visitors to portion of the heritage area's website devoted to partners' marketing. • Average length of time spent by visitors on this portion of website	Coordinating entity/NTCC, BNCVB
4.4 Educational Programming for Residents						
4(6)	4-5	Work with heritage area attractions on effective, collaborative research into the needs and interests of local audiences and ways to employ interactive programming.		Repeat in five years	• Completion of collaborative research project	Coordinating entity/NTCC, BNCVB; attractions
4(7)	4-6	Establish a working group or subcommittee of the Interpretive Committee to focus on adult education programming and create a short-range strategic plan that includes (but is not limited to) a focus on arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events.	Update every three years.	Update every three years	• Completion of a short-range strategic plan for adult educational programming covering, at a minimum, arts and cultural programs, outdoor recreation, and community events • Frequency of strategic plan updates	Coordinating entity Interpretive Committee/arts & cultural organizations, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, community event organizers

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(8)	4-6		Support innovative educational programs focusing on audiences of adult residents. Consider Road Scholar (formerly Elder Hostel) and offering continuing education classes related to the history and culture of the region, working with local colleges and universities and the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center.	Ongoing	• Number of educational programs produced for local adult audiences on an annual basis (measure annual increase or decrease) • Number of partners engaged in producing educational programs for adults (measure annual increase or decrease) • Community attendance at programs (measure annual increase or decrease) • Percentage of dollars provided to partners for this purpose vs. other dollars provided to partners; percentage of budget overall • Number of such programs deemed especially innovative based on feedback obtained through exit surveys and other surveys	Arts & cultural organizations, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, community event organizers
4.4.1 Arts and Cultural Programs						
4(9)	4-7		Involve the arts community in bringing engaging and relevant interpretation to a wide audience.		• Number of arts events or installations • Aggregate audience size associated with number of arts events or installations • Number of arts partners engaged in producing interpretation	Arts organizations & artists
4(10)	4-7		Involve the arts community in engaging residents in heritage area programs and events.		• Percentage of residents within aggregate audience associated with number of arts events or installations	Arts organizations & artists

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(11)	4-7	Include representatives of the arts community in strategic planning to support community engagement in the heritage area through educational programming.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of arts partners engaged in the strategic plan	Coordinating entity Interpretive Committee/arts & cultural organizations
4.4.2 Outdoor Recreation						
4(12)	4-9	Support the development of recreational access that affords wide access to the natural resources of the heritage area.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of recreational facilities built each year • Number of recreational users served by new recreational facilities in their first year(s)	State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway/ outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations
4(13)	4-9	[repeated from Chapter 3] Create a detailed map and guide to trails along the Niagara River.	Update every three years	Update every three years	• Production of detailed map/guide • Awards won for graphic design or other features • Completion of an update	Coordinating entity & State Parks/ local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway
4(14)	4-9	[repeated from Chapter 3] Encourage completion of a comprehensive hiking and biking trail system along the Niagara River Gorge.	Ongoing through mid-term phase.		• Number of miles or yards completed per year • Total percentage of planned system mileage or yardage remaining for completion per year	State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway
4(15)	4-9	Include representatives of the environmental education community in strategic planning to support community engagement in the heritage area through outdoor access and learning opportunities.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of environmental education partners engaged in the strategic plan	Coordinating entity Interpretive Committee/ State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(16)	4-9		Collaborate on the development of environmental education programs that provide deep experiences of the natural world, for residents, visitors, and students. Encourage participation of the tribal nations in providing access to and interpretation of the natural world.	Ongoing	• Number of environmental-outdoor education programs supported • Number of partners engaged in producing educational programs for adults (measure annual increase or decrease) • Program Attendance by visitors, residents, and students (measure annual increase or decrease) • Percentage of dollars provided to partners for this purpose vs. dollars provided to partners; percentage of budget overall • Number of such programs deemed especially deep based on feedback obtained through exit surveys and other surveys	State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations
4(17)	4-9		Collaborate on the development of interpretive and educational programs that connect outdoor experiences to an understanding of the effects of preserving the natural world and a clean environment on the long-term economic, social, and physical health of the heritage area and its communities.	Ongoing	• See above. • Number of programs connecting outdoor experiences, natural-resource preservation, and environmental quality to the economic, social, and physical health of the heritage area's communities	State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations
4.4.3 Community Events						
4(18)	4-11	Support community- and site-based events with assistance in strengthening their connections to the authentic heritage of the region.			• Number of events reporting making changes and improvements based on interpretive themes, research, and other guidance stimulated by the National Heritage Area	Event organizers (communities, nonprofit organizations, and/or civic groups, interpretive partners, etc.), Interpretive Committee

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(19)	4-11	Establish quality standards and recognition for participating events that meet those standards, for marketing to a visitor audience.			• Establishment of standards • Establishment of a way for visitors to understand that certain events meet National Heritage Area Standards • Increase in attendance at events recognized as meeting National Heritage Area standards	Interpretive Committee, NTCC and other tourism advisors, interpretive partners and event organizers
4(20)	4-11		Encourage more and innovative events, coordinating among communities where possible.		• Number of new events reflecting interpretive themes and otherwise meeting quality standards for interpretation (whether or not recognized by the National Heritage Area) • Number of new events involving more than one community or neighborhood • Number of new events completely unlike others already in existence	Event organizers (communities, nonprofit organizations, and/or civic groups, interpretive partners, etc.), Interpretive Committee, NTCC and tourism advisors
4(21)	4-11		Assist in marketing events, including encouraging visitors to enjoy events not specifically designed for visitors, who often appreciate the opportunity to experience the local flavor of "homegrown events" and meet residents.		• Number of "homegrown" events marketed • Increase in attendance at "homegrown" events by non-local visitors • Anecdotal evidence of outside visitation from visitors and event organizers	NTCC and tourism advisors

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(22)	4-11		Create regional events that will engage residents and visitors – judiciously, and with the help of volunteers, to minimize impacts on the coordinating entity's other duties.		• Establishment of one or more regional events • Holding of one or more of the same regional events in more than one year with same or better attendance • Number of participating partners per event/occasion (increase/decrease) • Number of volunteers per event/occasion (increase/decrease) • Number of attendees per event/occasion (increase/decrease)	Coordinating entity and various partners as appropriate to the event(s) created
4(23)	4-11	Work with communities on mitigating any negative impacts of large events, observing one of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's guiding principles for heritage tourism: "Find the Fit between the Community and Tourism: A good cultural heritage tourism effort makes the destination a better place to live as well as a better place to visit."			• Anecdotal evidence of problems, and problems solved • Rate of problem resolution (number of problems reported versus number of problems reported and resolved)	Local governments, event organizers, coordinating entity, experts from NPS and State Parks
4.5.1 Creating a Repository for Research						
4(24)	4-12	Inventory archival collections in the Niagara Falls region and perform a needs assessment, as the basis for a plan.			• Completion of an inventory	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(25)	4-12		Collaborate with Niagara Falls Public Library in developing a plan to make it the central archive and repository for historical information and collections on Niagara Falls region.	Update every five years.	• Completion of a plan • Progress toward implementation of actions named in the plan. • Completion of an update	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity
4.5.2 Recording Community Traditions and Memories						
4(26)	4-15	Inventory oral history collections in the Niagara Falls region and assess needs, as the basis for a plan for both preservation and spurring more interviews.	Undertake the plan.		• Completion of an inventory • Completion of a needs assessment • Completion of a plan for maintaining and increasing oral history interviews	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity
4(27)	4-15	Develop a web page pointing researchers to available archival and oral history collections.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Completion of a web page. • Quality of maintenance of the page on an annual basis	Niagara Falls Public Library and coordinating entity
4(28)	4-15		Participate in and support collection of oral histories.	Ongoing	• Number of oral histories supported • Number of oral histories in which coordinating entity and/or staff have participated	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity
4(29)	4-15		Support the identification and upgrading of existing oral histories with transcription/scanning, cataloging, indexing, and permissions.	Ongoing	• Number of oral histories transcribed and catalogued on an annual basis; percentage of those inventoried that have been transcribed and catalogued • Number of oral histories indexed annually; percentage • Number of oral histories with permissions recorded/obtained annually; percentage	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(30)	4-15		Create training programs and other events to encourage community involvement in researching, archiving, and recording local and oral history.	Ongoing	• Number of training programs offered on an annual basis • Number of other events offered annually • Number of participants in training and events annually • Number of annual oral histories conducted by participants (including those conducted by participants in previous years) • Number of other products/results reported by participants	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies, coordinating entity
4(31)	4-15	Share discoveries in local research with the general public through innovative outreach programs and technologies.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of outreach programs sharing results of local research. • Number of partners engaged in producing outreach programs re research (measure annual increase/decrease) • Attendance at programs by residents and visitors (measure annual increase/decrease)	Niagara Falls Public Library/higher education institutions, historical societies
4.6.1 Educational Programming for School Children						
4(32)	4-17	Establish an advisory committee or working group to advise the coordinating entity and heritage area partners on curriculum-based education programs and strategies, priorities, and the shaping of programs in general for engaging the region's young people.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Establishment of an advisory group • Number of meetings of the advisory group • Recommendations provided by the group compared to results obtained from recommendations	Coordinating entity/school boards, higher education institutions

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(33)	4-17	Ensure that local students experience an expansive, innovative educational program that instills a sense of appreciation and pride for the community and environment in which they live and offers an integrated view of community history and environmental conditions.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of classes and outings offered (measure annual increase/decrease) • Number of students participating in classes and outings (measure annual increase/decrease) • Number of heritage area attractions and sites hosting class outings (measure annual increase/decrease) • Anecdotal evidence of students' undertaking community and environmental projects and volunteer hours following exposure in classes and outings	School boards/higher education institutions, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, heritage area attractions
4(34)	4-17		Work with local schools to establish a "heritage civics" program encompassing learning about local government, the state parks, tourism, outdoor recreation, and the heritage area within state standards.	Ongoing	• Development of a curriculum for "heritage civics" • Alterations/updates to the curriculum • Training programs offered for teachers; measure increase or decrease on an annual basis • Number of schools offering the curriculum; measure increase or decrease and percentage on an annual basis • Number of students affected by the curriculum; measure increase or decrease and percentage • Number of field trips incurred in support of the curriculum; measure increase or decrease	School boards, higher education institutions/coordinating entity, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC, local governments, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, heritage area attractions

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(35)	4-19	Work with partners on interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers, and young adults that use local history and historic sites to meet state curriculum requirements.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of field trips to historic sites; measure increase or decrease on an annual basis • Number of students participating in field trips; measure increase or decrease by age cohort • Number of special local history programs offered in schools • Number of students participating in special history programs; measure increase or decrease by age cohort	School boards, higher education institutions, heritage area historical attractions and sites, historical societies
4(36)	4-17	Work with partners on interactive and engaging opportunities for children, teenagers and young adults that use local natural sites to meet state curriculum requirements in science and to foster environmental stewardship.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of field trips to natural sites; measure increase/decrease on an annual basis • Number of students participating in field trips; measure increase/decrease by age cohort	School boards, higher education institutions, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, NTCC, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations,
4(37)	4-17		Establish a scholastic honors program that encourages high school students to undertake special projects in research, interpretation, conservation, the arts, local government, peoples of the region, and other subjects.		• Design and establishment of scholastic honors program, measure increase or decrease in number of schools participating on an annual and percentage basis • Number of teachers receiving training, annual increase or decrease • Number of participating teachers, annual increase or decrease • Number of high school-age students participating; measure increase or decrease	Coordinating entity, school boards/most partners could participate

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(38)	4-18	Identify specific needs for teacher training (workshops, webinars, continuing education classes, etc.) to enable teachers to utilize heritage area sites effectively for student education; encourage sites to work collaboratively to meet these needs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Completion of a needs assessment • Design of teacher training program • Alterations/updates to training program • Number of heritage area sites participating in teacher training • Number of teachers receiving training, annual increase or decrease	School boards, coordinating entity, higher education institutions, State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations, heritage area attractions and sites
4(39)	4-18			Recruit a volunteer corps of educators to act as special traveling docents for school groups, representing a collaborative group of interpretive attractions, to be available for classroom presentations and supplement on-site interpretive staff (both professional and volunteer).	• Formation of a volunteer corps. • Number of educators participating, annual increase or decrease • Number of participating attractions • Number classroom presentations, annual increase or decrease • Number of on-site presentations, annual increase or decrease	Heritage area attractions and sites, individual educators, heritage area attractions and sites/ State Parks, local park agencies, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations
4.6.2 Other Youth Outreach						
4(40)	4-20	Continue the Junior Ranger Program and cultivate it as an anchor for continued collaboration and research and for expanded educational programming.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Continue Junior Ranger Program • Anecdotal documentation of collaboration and research conducted by students/teachers • Anecdotal documentation of expanded educational programs	Coordinating entity/schools & educators
4(41)	4-20		Develop additional ways for individual engagement with the sites and programs of the heritage area, at appropriate age intervals reaching ages from 6 to 26.	Ongoing	• Number of programs developed • Number of youths engaged, by age cohort; measure annual increase or decrease	Heritage area attractions, schools & educators, State and local parks, outdoor recreation & environmental education organizations

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 4 • Community Engagement						
4(42)	4-20		Include a "Junior Ambassador" opportunity in cooperation with the regular Ambassador program described in Chapter 3.	Ongoing	• Design and implementation of "Junior Ambassador" program • Number of participating youths by age cohort; measure annual increase or decrease • Anecdotal documentation of youth experiences	NTCC & coordinating entity, schools & educators
4(43)	4-20		Seek collaboration or assistance from the Student Conservation Association, the Western District of the New York State OPRHP, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor in creating programs to serve parks and trails for resident youth.		• Design of parks and trails program for resident youth • Implementation of program • Number of youths served; measure annual increase or decrease • Number of park/trail projects completed	Heritage area attractions and sites, individual educators, heritage area attractions, State and local parks, Niagara River Greenway, outdoor recreation and environmental education organizations
4(44)	4-20			Partner with local trades organizations or artists' guilds in creating training or apprentice programs in preservation and conservation trades and skills.	• Design of training/apprentice program(s) • Number of partnerships with local trade organizations • Number of participants; measure annual increase or decrease • Number of participants who go on to employment in trades	Heritage area attractions and sites, State Parks, local park agencies, local trades organizations/guilds
4(45)	4-20			Partner with regionally based youth organizations to encourage them to adapt their programs to the needs of heritage area attractions and vice versa.	• Number of regionally based youth groups incorporating heritage area attractions into their services/programs • Number of heritage area attractions working with regionally based youth groups • Number of participating youths	Youth organizations, coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5.2 Preservation, Conservation and Resource Stewardship at the Regional Level						
5(1)	5-4	Form a regional coalition of resource stewardship interests to forge an alliance that promotes historic preservation and environmental conservation as an economic development tool with the Western New York Regional Economic Development Council including a list of programs and projects that would have a regional impact.	Adjust method and approach as state program evolves and/or governor's administration changes	Adjust method and approach as state program evolves and/or governor's administration changes	• Business interests in region embrace resource stewardship as part of economic development program • List of successfully funded projects and programs – track matching funds, value of in-kind contributions, and jobs created	Cultural lead: Preservation Buffalo Niagara; Environmental lead: to be identified/ Coordinating entity should serve strong support role with other stewardship interests
5(2)	5-4	The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should use technical and administrative resources available through Preservation Buffalo Niagara to strengthen historic preservation advocacy in the heritage area.	Ongoing active relationship with PBN and countywide historic preservation organization	Ongoing active relationship with PBN and countywide historic preservation organization	• Countywide historic preservation organization operates as strategic partner with PBN • Historic preservation is accepted as a primary community value by majority of political leadership	Coordinating entity/ Preservation Buffalo Niagara and countywide historic preservation organization
5(3)	5-5	The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should approach the Niagara River Greenway Commission to develop, support, and advance heritage area projects/programs.	Ongoing active relationship with Niagara River Greenway Commission	Ongoing active relationship with Niagara River Greenway Commission	• Number of National Heritage Area projects funded and supported by Niagara River Greenway Commission	National Heritage Area/Niagara River Greenway Commission
5.2.1 Regional Historic Preservation Plan						
5(4)	5-5		The National Heritage Area will develop a coalition of regional historic preservation interests to collaborate on the preparation of a regional historic preservation plan that would include historic preservation strategies and assistance to smaller local governments such as the Village of Youngstown and Town of Porter.	Plan is updated as needed	• Historic preservation is accepted as a primary community value by majority of political leadership • Cultural resources are viewed as regional assets and destruction or degradation of resources is rare	Regional preservation coalition/National Heritage Area, Preservation Buffalo Niagara, countywide historic preservation organization, and local governments

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5.2.2 Regional Cultural Resource Inventory and Database						
5(5)	5-6	A strategy should be adopted by the historic preservation coalition to create a comprehensive regional cultural resource database that is user-friendly and accessible to the public that includes an inventory of historic buildings and structures, sites, and cultural landscapes relating to the Heritage Area.	Expand to include five-county region (boundary of Western New York REDC)	Update as needed when new cultural resources are documented	• Database is online and actively accessed by a variety of users for different purposes • Information on local history and properties is common knowledge	Host organization (to be identified)/Coordinating entity, NY-SHPO, countywide preservation organization, local governments, schools
5.2.3 Designation of Significant Historic/Cultural Resources						
5(6)	5-7	The heritage area should seek support from property owners, the New York State Historic Preservation Office, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, and local governments for the nomination of eligible individual properties, historic districts, and multiple properties related by theme associated with the heritage area to the National Register.	Additional NR nominations submitted	Additional NR nominations submitted	• List of NR eligible properties in Niagara County developed by countywide organization and endorsed by NY-SHPO and NPS • 50% increase in number of NR designated properties in heritage area over 10 year period	Countywide preservation organization/National Heritage Area, local governments, property owners
5(7)	5-7		Encourage a coalition of National Heritage Areas and associated preservation organizations to support preparation of a National Historic Landmark Special Theme Study for the 'Transportation and Industry along the Great Lakes' theme that incorporates the eastern portion of the Great Lakes basin including the Niagara River, St. Lawrence Seaway, Hudson River, and Erie Canalway along with the nomination of associated resources.	Nominate eligible National Historic Landmark properties that contribute to Special Theme Study	• Completion of Special Theme Study and designation of associated properties as National Historic Landmarks	National Park Service/NY-SHPO and coalition of National Heritage Areas in New York

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	**Performance Indicator(s)** Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	**Lead/Partners** Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(8)	5-8			The heritage area organization should seek support from the National Park Service and a Canadian partner organization for a joint nomination of Niagara Falls to the World Heritage List as a 'mixed property' of both natural and cultural significance.	• Designation by UNESCO of Niagara Falls as a World Heritage Site	National Park Service and Parks Canada/Congressional delegation, NY delegation, Governors' Office, NY-SHPO, National Heritage Area, Preservation Buffalo Niagara, local governments.
5(9)	5-9		The heritage area should use information provided by Ontario's Niagara Escarpment Commission to provide interpretation for the New York portion of the escarpment that is located within the heritage area.	Ongoing	• Interpretive infrastructure and program in place	National Heritage Area/NY State Parks, Ontario's Niagara Escarpment Commission
5.3 Historic Preservation in Niagara County						
5(10)	5-9	The Niagara Falls National Heritage Area should partner with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society and historic preservation interests in Niagara County, including the County Historian, to form a county-wide historic preservation network and coalition.	Countywide historic preservation alliance continues	Countywide historic preservation alliance continues	• Increase in number of successful historic preservation projects and programs for members of countywide alliance	County Historian/National Heritage Area, local historical commissions, societies, and historic preservation organizations
5(11)	5-9	The countywide historic preservation coalition will partner with Preservation Buffalo Niagara to introduce and duplicate successful PBN programs in Niagara County.	PBN partnership continues	PBN partnership continues	• Current PBN programs in Erie County are also successfully implemented in Niagara County	Preservation Buffalo Niagara/National Heritage Area, County Historian, and countywide historic preservation alliance

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(12)	5-9		The countywide coalition of historic preservation organizations should approach representatives from Niagara County to determine if interest exists in establishing a countywide historic preservation program and, if so, seek Certified Local Government status to assist in achieving countywide historic preservation goals and funding.	Countywide CLG program continues	• Niagara County adopts historic preservation goals as part of its planning programs • Niagara County serves as CLG parent organization for interested local municipalities • Increase in number of CLG grants awarded in Niagara County	Niagara County and County Historian/National Heritage Area, municipalities, countywide historic preservation alliance
5.4.2 Research Advisory Group						
5(13)	5-11	The Research Advisory Group should be created as a subcommittee of the heritage area organization using the criteria outlined in this subsection.	Research Advisory Group continues to assist National Heritage Area	Research Advisory Group continues to assist National Heritage Area	• Objectives outlined for Research Advisory Group n Management Plan are achieved	National Heritage Area/ academic, professional and agency representatives to serve on subcommittee
5.4.3 Oral History Project						
5(14)	5-12		Coordinate with other historical organizations in the countywide network in conducting oral history interviews using professional standards and best practices.	Oral history interviews continue as informants are identified	• Number of oral history interviews increase or decrease annually • Interviews are publically accessible and used to augment various interpretive programs	Lead to be determined/ coordinating entity, local libraries, historical societies, schools
5.4.4 Cultural Resource Surveys						
5(15)	5-13	The heritage area organization should partner with local communities and the countywide historic preservation coalition to conduct historic/cultural resource surveys of historic properties, archeological sites, geographic areas and cultural landscapes that are not adequately documented within the heritage area.	Historic/cultural resource surveys ongoing	Historic/cultural resource surveys ongoing	• All historic architectural properties in the heritage area built before January 1, 1965 are inventoried • An archeological predictive model for site probability within the heritage area is in place • A cultural landscape assessment relating to the heritage area interpretive themes is prepared	National Heritage Area (Research Advisory Group)/ National Park Service, NY-SHPO, local governments, countywide historic preservation alliance, and Preservation Buffalo Niagara

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5.4.5 Historic/Cultural Resource Database for the Heritage Area						
5(16)	5-13	The National Heritage Area should seek an academic or private sector partner with established GIS credentials to develop a cultural resource database that includes an inventory of historic buildings and structures, archeological sites, objects and cultural features relating to the heritage area using the criteria outlined above.	Maintain and update database	Maintain and update database	• All cultural resource survey information for the heritage area is consolidated and managed in a single or networked database • Online access to the database is available to the general public in a user-friendly format • Archeological site information is managed in a manner that encourages protection • Links to the virtual archives are embedded in the database	Lead organization to be determined/National Heritage Area (Research Advisory Group), National Park Service, NY-SHPO, local governments, countywide historic preservation alliance, and schools
5.4.6 Virtual Archives						
5(17)	5-14	The heritage area organization should partner with an organization to initiate work on the virtual archives.	Maintain and update virtual archives	Maintain and update virtual archives	• All archival information for the heritage area is consolidated and managed in a networked location • Online access to the virtual archives available to the general public in a user-friendly format • Links to the cultural resource database are embedded in the virtual archives	Lead organization to be determined/National Heritage Area (Research Advisory Group), National Park Service, NY-SHPO, local governments, countywide historic preservation alliance, and schools
5.4.7 Preservation Planning in Heritage Area Communities						
5(18)	5-15	The heritage area organization should partner with local governments within the heritage area to prepare and implement the preservation planning tools necessary to identify, designate, preserve and protect the significant historic resources in their communities.	Ongoing efforts	Ongoing efforts	• A historic preservation program is in place for all municipalities located within the heritage area boundary	National Heritage Area /Countywide historic preservation alliance, Preservation Buffalo Niagara, and local governments

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5.4.8 Certified Local Government Program						
5(19)	5-15		The heritage area organization should facilitate a discussion with representatives from the Village of Youngstown to determine if seeking Certified Local Government status would assist the community in achieving their historic preservation goals and how such a program may be administered with a limited staff.		See Action 5(12) above	See Action 5(12) above
5.4.9 Historic/Cultural Resource Preservation and Protection						
5(20)	5-17	Partner with the owners of historic properties that are important to the four heritage area themes in devising a strategy to preserve and protect the historical and architectural integrity these significant resources.	Ongoing outreach	Ongoing outreach	• Historic preservation incentives are made available to owners of historic properties • Rehabilitation and restoration work conforms to established historic preservation procedures and practice • Interpretive information is made available to the public with occasional public access provided	Coordinating entity, private property owners, local governments, historic preservation trades workers and professionals, countywide historic preservation alliance, and Preservation Buffalo Niagara
5(21)	5-17		Partner with local governments and the countywide historic preservation coalition to develop historic preservation design guidelines for historic districts in the heritage area that provides guidance on the rehabilitation of historic buildings and the design of new infill construction.	Ongoing implementation of design guidelines	• Adopted guidelines follow Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation • Guidelines are available to users online and presented in user-friendly format • Effective guidance and enforcement is provided	Preservation Buffalo Niagara /Local governments, National Heritage Area, Countywide historic preservation alliance, and historic preservation professionals

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(22)	5-17			Partner with local governments and an appropriate easement receiving entity to consider implementation of a façade easement program in the heritage area that would preserve and protect the facades of significant historic buildings and offer incentives and tax benefits to property owners.	• Adopt easement requirements that conform to established best practices • Establish program to take full advantage of tax benefits • Effective guidance and enforcement is provided	Lead organization to be determined/ National Heritage Area, countywide historic preservation alliance, and Preservation Buffalo Niagara
5(23)	5-17	Partner with local governments and the countywide historic preservation coalition to implement a facade improvement matching grant program for owners and tenants of designated historic residential and commercial buildings.	Program ongoing	Program ongoing	• Require applicants to use the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and Standards for Historic Rehabilitation • Increased private sector investment in façade fix-ups and compatible signage • Improved appearance of commercial districts and neighborhoods in heritage area	National Heritage Area/ local governments, countywide historic preservation alliance, and Preservation Buffalo Niagara
5(24)	5-17			Initiate a partnership with other preservation organizations and agencies to establish a revolving fund for the acquisition, stabilization and restoration of significant historic resources.	• Require applicants to use Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines and Standards • Increased private sector investment in building rehabilitation • Improved appearance of commercial districts and neighborhoods in heritage area	Preservation Buffalo Niagara/ National Heritage Area and countywide historic preservation alliance

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(25)	5-18		Complete a cultural landscape inventory to better understand the distinct components of cultural and historic landscapes within the primary heritage area boundary and prepare a National Register nomination, if appropriate.		• Use landscape assessment methodology developed by the National Park Service	National Heritage Area/National Park Service, NY-SHPO, and cultural landscape specialist
5(26)	5-19		To identify possible locations of undocumented archeological sites, the National Heritage Area should consult with a professional archeologist to prepare an archaeological predictive model and archaeological sensitivity map for use by local governments and preservation organizations within the heritage area boundary.		• Use established best practices for creating archeological predictive model and sensitivity map	National Heritage Area/ local governments, NY-SHPO, and professional archeologists
5(27)	5-19		When land development is proposed in areas of high archeological site probability as identified by the archaeological predictive model and shown on the archaeological sensitivity map, an archeological survey using a subsurface sampling methodology should be conducted by a professional archeologist. A data recovery strategy should be implemented for any significant archeological deposits or features that will be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development.		• Use established best practices for conducting archeological assessment surveys • Increasing number of documented archeological sites and features	Local governments/ National Heritage Area, NY-SHPO, and professional archeologists

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(28)	5-19		The heritage area organization should actively solicit the assistance of individuals and organizations that possess knowledge of local prehistory and history in determining archeological site locations and cataloging private artifact collections.	Ongoing program	• Use established best practices for collections registration • Increasing number of documented archeological sites and artifacts	County Historian/ National Heritage Area, NY-SHPO, local historical societies, museums, local collectors, avocational and professional archeologist
5(29)	5-19		Partner with local governments and an appropriate easement receiving entity to consider implementation of a conservation easement program in the heritage area that would preserve and protect significant archeological sites and offer possible incentives & tax benefits to property owners.	Ongoing program	• Use established best practices for conservation easement program • Offer tax incentives and benefits for property owners • Increasing number of protected archeological sites	Easement receiving entity to be identified/ National Heritage Area, local governments, and professional archeologists
5.5.1 The State Environmental Quality Review Process						
5(30)	5-20	The National Heritage Area should advocate for the mitigation of significant resources when proposed projects are under SEQR review within the heritage area boundary.	Ongoing program	Ongoing program	• Track number of SEQR projects in heritage area and mitigation results	State agencies/ National Heritage Area, local governments, environmental and historic preservation advocacy groups
5.5.2 Environmental Conservation Issues						
5(31)	5-20	The National Heritage Area and its partners should provide interpretation for the heritage area themes that promote an appreciation for natural resources and create an awareness of current environmental issues in locations where significant resources are not currently interpreted.	Ongoing program	Ongoing program	• Priorities for local environmental issues identified and integrated into interpretive program for residents and visitors • Number of interpretive programs featuring environmental issues as a quantitative measure • Awareness and appreciation of environmental resources as a qualitative measure	Local and regional environmental groups, coordinating entity, NPS

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(32)	5-21		The National Heritage Area shall promote the sustainable use of trails along the Niagara Gorge.	Ongoing program	• Monitoring entity identified; quantitative and qualitative measures developed for sustainable trail use	NY State Parks, monitoring entity to be identified
5(33)	5-21		The National Heritage Area shall promote, encourage, support, and facilitate the conservation of land for environmental protection and the designation of environmentally sensitive/ resource management areas by environmental agencies and organizations.	Ongoing program	• Increase in number of acres purchased and managed for environmental conservation purposes.	Regional, national and international environmental organizations
5.6.1 Programs in the New York Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation						
5(34)	5-23	Work closely with staff in the Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau to identify and evaluate historic resources associated with the heritage area and solicit grant funds for related historic preservation projects.	Continue efforts	Continue efforts	• Track state grant funding for projects relating to the heritage area	State agencies/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity, all heritage area partners
5(35)	5-23	Engage staff with the Bureau of Historic Sites to provide technical assistance in the implementation of the interpretation program historic, preservation projects, and archeological research associated with state-owned historic and cultural properties in the heritage area.	Continue efforts	Continue efforts	• Collaboration with state agencies for state-owned properties	New York State agency staff/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(36)	5-23		Consult with staff in the Environmental Management Bureau to identify common and rare animal and plant species in the heritage area for interpretive programs and to address issues of conservation and resource sustainability.		• Detailed inventory of environmental resources for heritage area	State agency staff/ National Heritage Area and local environmental advocacy organizations
5(37)	5-24		Coordinate and partner with the management entities for the Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridor and Underground Railroad State Heritage Area on shared preservation and conservation goals, projects and programs.	Collaboration ongoing	• Number of collaborative projects. (NOTE: Program was not funded in the current state fiscal year)	National Heritage Area/ Western Erie Canal State Heritage Corridor and Underground Railroad State Heritage Area
5(38)	5-24		Coordinate and partner with the New York State Heritage Trails program to identify, preserve and promote historic sites and heritage attractions in the heritage area that relate to the four heritage trail historic themes and seek matching grant funding for projects that meet the program's objectives.	Collaboration ongoing	• Number of collaborative projects. (NOTE: Program was not funded in the current state fiscal year)	National Heritage Area/ New York Heritage Trails Program
5.6.2 Programs in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation						
5(39)	5-25		Partner with environmental conservation and community groups in the heritage area that may want to offer public environmental education programs and community improvements that relate to the goals and objectives shared between the Environmental Justice Community Impact program and this management plan.	Ongoing	• Collaborative projects and successful grant applications	Local environmental conservation and community groups/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(40)	5-25			Explore possibility of interpreting legacy of Superfund and Brownfield sites in the vicinity of Niagara Falls as part of National Heritage Area interpretation using available grant funding from this program.	• Collaborative projects and successful grant applications	Local community groups/City of Niagara Falls, National Heritage Area coordinating entity
5(41)	5-26		Partner with environmental conservation and community groups that offer public conservation education programs and community improvements that relate to Urban and Community Forestry Programs.	Ongoing	• Collaborative projects and successful grant applications	Local environmental conservation and community groups/ local governments, National Heritage Area coordinating entity, urban forestry professionals
5.6.3 Programs in the New York Department of State						
5(42)	5-26		Assist the City of Niagara Falls in achieving project objectives relating to tourism objectives that tell the history of the Buffalo Avenue Corridor including public education and interpretation improvements and activities.	Ongoing	• Collaborative projects and successful grant applications	City of Niagara Falls/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity
5(43)	5-27		Assist and support municipalities located within the heritage area in designing and developing projects that will improve public access to the community's waterfronts, preserve and enhance significant resources, and provide interpretation about the natural and cultural history of the Niagara River.	Ongoing	• Collaborative projects and successful grant applications	Local governments/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity, New York Power Authority, New York State Parks

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5.6.4 Statewide Preservation and Conservation Organizations						
5(44)	5-28		The heritage area organization should establish a working relationship with leading statewide preservation and conservation organizations and seek technical assistance, advocacy support and funding when needed.	Ongoing	• Membership and active participation in programs	New York Cultural Heritage Tourism Network/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity, local museums and heritage attractions
5.6.5 National Preservation and Conservation Organizations						
5(45)	5-28	The National Heritage Area should maintain its membership with the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and actively participate in its meetings, educational programs and workshops.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Membership and active participation in programs	National Heritage Area coordinating entity/Alliance of National Heritage Areas
5(46)	5-28	The heritage area organization should strive to maintain a connection with the National Trust through its available programs including the new National Treasures initiative.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Membership and active participation in programs	National Heritage Area coordinating entity/National Trust for Historic Preservation
5.7.2 Stewardship of Native American Resources in the Heritage Area						
5(47)	5-30	Conduct interviews with representatives from each federally recognized tribal nation in the vicinity of the two-county area to provide opportunity beyond this management plan to retrieve information regarding traditions, stories, resources, landscapes, and activities within and related to the heritage area that are important to each tribal nation.	Ongoing, as needed	Ongoing, as needed	• Number of interviews conducted	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, National Park Service, tribal representatives

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 5 • Preservation, Conservation & Resource Stewardship						
5(48)	5-30	Prepare a detailed cultural context statement for each tribe that still exists or once existed in the two-county vicinity that provides a background history, ethnographic information, biographies of past and present tribal leaders, location and names of villages, conflicts with other tribes, diagnostic artifacts, museum collections, and an annotated bibliography.	Ongoing, as needed	Ongoing, as needed	• Complete cultural context statement prepared for each participating federally-recognized tribe	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, regional museums, National Park Service, tribal representatives
5(49)	5-31	Identify natural resources, environmental settings, ecological processes and cultural landscapes within the primary heritage area boundary that are significant to Native American tribal groups.	Ongoing, as needed	Ongoing, as needed	• Report prepared summarizing findings for each participating federally-recognized tribe	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, National Park Service, tribal representatives, local environmental groups
5(50)	5-31	Maintain an inventory and develop a predictive model for the location of prehistoric and proto-historic archeological sites associated with indigenous peoples in the two-county area and preserve unprotected archeological sites through land acquisition or conservation easement programs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Increasing number of documented archeological sites and features associated with indigenous people [see Action 5(26)] • Increasing number of documented archeological sites and features [see Action 5(27)]	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, National Park Service, tribal representatives, countywide historic preservation coalition
5(51)	5-31	When and where appropriate, assist Native American tribal groups in sharing and interpreting ceremonies, traditions and activities with other Niagara County residents and visitors.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number of interpretive programs integrating Native American perspective • Number of participating partner organizations	Tribal representatives, National Heritage Area coordinating entity, partner organizations, National Park Service

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6.2.1 Regional Positioning						
6(1)	6-5	The countywide coalition of historic preservation organizations must forge an alliance with academic, tourism, business, and conservation organizations to develop and promote a comprehensive preservation and conservation strategy with local and regional economic development interests.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Alliance forged, strategy developed and adopted by participating organizations with frequent interaction	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, local and regional academic institutions, chambers of commerce, NTCC, economic development authorities in two-county area, local and regional environmental groups, countywide historic preservation coalition
6.2.2 The Great Lakes Megalopolis						
6(2)	6-5		The National Heritage Area and its partners should consider the Great Lakes Megalopolis super-region as a primary target market for tourism and should provide an interpretive context that recognizes the shared macro-historical context, climate, environment, ethnic groups, and cultural traditions.		• Increase in inquiries and visitation from residents of super-region • Increase in purchase and rental of properties from residents of super-region • Decrease in vacancy rates. • Opening of branch offices and retail storefronts in vicinity by super-regional businesses	Super-region planning organization to be identified/ Coordinating entity, NTCC, Western NY Regional Economic Development Council, Empire State Development Corporation, regional Canadian partner to be identified
6(3)	6-5		The National Heritage Area recognizes that all communities located in the Great Lakes Megalopolis super-region hold in common certain natural resources and will participate in the sustainable consumption and conservation of these resources as a means of community revitalization.	Ongoing program	• Membership and participation in super-region communication network and organizations • Sustainability and conservation guidelines and standards adopted	Super-region sustainability organization to be identified/ local sustainability organization to be identified, National Heritage Area coordinating entity, local and regional academic institutions, NTCC

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6.2.3 The Toronto Metropolitan Area						
6(4)	6-6		The National Heritage Area should coordinate and collaborate on interpretive programming with Canadian heritage tourism organizations and attractions establishing relationships with thematically related sites in Ontario, Canada.	Ongoing	• Shared destination marketing and advertising by Niagara Falls USA and Niagara Falls Canada • Major special events held on both sides of border • Shared interpretive programming and referrals between heritage attractions in both nations	Niagara USA/Regional Canadian tourism partner to be identified, National Heritage Area, Western New York Regional Economic Development Council
6(5)	6-6		The National Heritage Area and its communities should partner with Canadian municipalities on the opposite bank of the Niagara River and the Fort George National Historic Site to stage an annual "Falls to the Forts" special event with shared programs and activities.	Ongoing	• Increase in inquiries by Canadian tour companies • Increase in visitation from residents of Toronto metro area	Niagara USA/Coalition of National Heritage Area attractions
6(6)	6-6		The National Heritage Area and its associated communities should explore a "joint residency" program with Canadian municipalities on the opposite bank of the Niagara River to encourage increased interaction among residents in these communities.	Ongoing	• Outcomes to be determined by intergovernmental committees and organizations	Intergovernmental committees and organizations
6(7)	6-6		The National Heritage Area and its tourism partners should establish a detailed understanding of which interpretive stories in the heritage area appeal to Canadian visitors and develop a specific visitor experience customized for this market.	Ongoing	• Documentation of market as determined by interviews and/or focus groups.	Niagara USA (NTCC) / Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau Coalition of National Heritage Area attractions

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6.2.4 Western New York Regional Economic Development Council; 6.2.5 USA Niagara Development Corporation						
6(8)	6-9	The National Heritage Area and its partners should participate in a regional working group for community revitalization, heritage tourism, and historic preservation that will assist the WNYREDC and USA Niagara Development Corporation in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in its strategic plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Major public and quasi-public projects funded and built • Preservation and conservation values are adopted and communicated by regional economic development interests • Increase in private sector investment for revitalization	Western New York Regional Economic Development Council and Empire State Development Corporation/Coalition of regional historic preservation and environmental conservation interests
6(9)	6-9	The National Heritage Area and its partners should provide regional leadership by setting the standard for quality in tourism product development that encourages community revitalization and enhancing the region's attraction.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Lead tourism product development efforts in the heritage area • Actively participate in regional efforts to develop and promote heritage tourism • Number of collaborative projects and activities among partners	National Heritage Area/ Niagara USA (NTCC), Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau, and coalition of thematically related sites and attractions in Erie and Niagara counties
6(10)	6-9	The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. Preservation Buffalo Niagara and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor to implement shared community revitalization objectives and collaborate on related programming.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Participation in Preservation Buffalo Niagara and Erie Canalway NHC meetings, activities and events • Number of collaborative projects and activities among partners • Number of collective public outreach efforts among partners	National Heritage Area/ Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc., Preservation Buffalo Niagara, and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities – Village of Youngstown						
6(11)	Assist the Village of Youngstown with the following projects as part of the heritage area's interpretive program:					
6(11a)	6-10	• Develop a major landscape interpretive exhibit on the Battle of Belle-Famille at an appropriate location in Youngstown.	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Exhibit design and content to follow best practices and guidelines established by National Association for Interpretation	National Heritage Area/ Village of Youngstown, Old Fort Niagara, Town of Porter Historical Society, NY State Parks, and National Park Service
6(11b)	6-10	• Design and install a series of landscape exhibits, heritage area publications, online media, and the Junior Ranger program that tell the story of Youngstown.	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Exhibit design and content follow best practices and guidelines established by National Association for Interpretation • Honorary recognition received for specific interpretive projects and programs	National Heritage Area/ Village of Youngstown, Town of Porter Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, NY State Parks, National Park Service
6(11c)	6-10	• Strengthen physical and interpretive connections between the Youngstown village center Old Fort Niagara through trails, wayfinding, and wayside exhibits.	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Use of a variety of interpretive methods and techniques • Improvements should enhance appearance of significant resources	National Heritage Area/ Village of Youngstown, Town of Porter Historical Society, Old Fort Niagara, NY State Parks, National Park Service
6(12)	6-11		The Youngstown village center and Old Fort Niagara will be stations along the proposed heritage area transportation network which should include the proposed Niagara River water taxi between the Village of Youngstown and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario.	Ongoing	***See Actions 3(24)***	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority/ Niagara County, Village of Youngstown, , NY State Parks, private tour operators, others as appropriate

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(13)	6-11	The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in the Village of Youngstown that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the Village and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Increase in number of small business startups and expansion of existing businesses • Establishment and sustaining of tourism-oriented businesses	Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce/ Niagara Small Business Development Center, Village of Youngstown
6(14)	6-11	The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Village of Youngstown community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and special events.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Municipalities to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in respective communities	Village of Youngstown / coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(15)	6-11		The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with the Village of Youngstown to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in the village center.	Ongoing	• Use Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation as a requirement for program applicants • Number of successful façade improvement projects	Village of Youngstown/ property owners and tenants, countywide historic preservation alliance and funding providers
6(16)	6-11			The National Heritage Area in partnership with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should consider involving Youngstown residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.	• Number of participants in training program. • Number of active guides and ambassadors available to assist visitors in the heritage area. • Total number of hours worked by program participants	Niagara University/ Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Small Business Development Center, Village of Youngstown, Town of Porter, and Niagara County Community College

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities – Town of Porter						
6(17)	6-11	The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Town of Porter on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events within the heritage area boundary including the Town's historical museum.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Municipalities to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in respective communities	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Porter officials, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(18)	6-12	The National Heritage Area will coordinate with community leaders to provide information and updates about programs, projects and initiatives.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Refer to performance indicators for the Communications Plan in Chapter 7	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Porter officials, representatives from local organizations
6(19)	6-12		The National Heritage Area should consider developing partnerships with organizations that own and operate thematically related sites located outside of the heritage area boundary, but within the limits of the Town of Porter.	Ongoing	• Increase in heritage area participation by representatives from thematically related sites in the Town of Porter	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Porter officials, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities – Village of Lewiston						
6(20)	Assist the Village of Lewiston with the following projects as part of the heritage area's interpretive program:					
6(20a)	6-12	• Develop major exhibits on the Native American, African American and the portage around the falls portage, and Niagara Escarpment stories;	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Exhibit design and content to follow best practices and guidelines established by National Association for Interpretation	National Heritage Area/ ArtPark nonprofit organization, NY State Parks, Tuscarora and Seneca Tribal Nations

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(20b)	6-12	• Design and install a series of landscape exhibits, heritage area publications, online media and the Junior Ranger program that tell the story of the Village of Lewiston;	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Exhibit design and content follow best practices and guidelines • Honorary recognition received for specific interpretive projects and programs	National Heritage Area coordinating entity/ Village of Lewiston, ArtPark non-profit organization, NY State Parks, National Park Service
6(20c)	6-12	• Design and install landscape exhibits at the Lewiston Landing waterfront interpreting community history, the Borderland themes and programmatic connections between Lewiston as part of the Falls-to-the-Fort storyline.	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	• Exhibit design and content follow best practices and guidelines established by National Association for Interpretation • Honorary recognition received for specific interpretive projects and programs	National Heritage Area coordinating entity/ Village of Lewiston, ArtPark non-profit organization, NY State Parks, National Park Service
6(21)	6-13	The National Heritage Area will assist in supporting & enhancing programs & events led by the Village & local community organizations such as the Lewiston Council on the Arts & Historical Association of Lewiston.			• Annual number of successful projects and programs implemented by local community organizations	Lewiston Council on the Arts, Historical Association of Lewiston/ National Heritage Area coordinating entity
6(22)	6-13		Downtown Lewiston and ArtPark will be stations along the proposed heritage area transportation network.	Ongoing	***See Action 3(24)***	Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority/ Niagara County, Village of Lewiston, NY State Parks, private tour operators
6(25)	6-13	The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in the Village of Lewiston that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the Village and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Increase in number of small business startups and expansion of existing businesses • Establishment and sustaining of tourism-oriented businesses	Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce/ Niagara Small Business Development Center, Village of Lewiston

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(26)	6-13	The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Lewiston community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Municipalities to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in respective communities	Village and Town of Lewiston/ coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(27)	6-13		The National Heritage Area should partner with the Village to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in the village center.	Ongoing	• Use Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation as a requirement for program applicants • Number of successful façade improvement projects	Village of Lewiston/ property owners & tenants, countywide historic preservation alliance, funding providers
6(28)	6-13			The National Heritage Area in partnership with the proposed Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should consider involving Lewiston residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.	• Number of participants in training program. • Number of active guides and ambassadors available to assist visitors in the heritage area. • Total number of hours worked by program participants.	Niagara University/ Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Small Business Development Center, Village of Lewiston, Niagara County Community College.
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities – Town of Lewiston						
6(29)	6-13	The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Town of Lewiston on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events within the heritage area boundary.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Municipalities to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in respective communities	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Lewiston officials, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(30)	6-13	The National Heritage Area will coordinate with community leaders to provide information and updates about heritage area programs, projects and initiatives.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Refer to performance indicators for the Communications Plan in Chapter 7	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Lewiston officials, representatives from local organizations

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(31)	6-14	The National Heritage Area will collaborate with the Town of Lewiston's efforts to partner with New York State Parks in further developing Joseph Davis State Park as an environmental learning center.	Ongoing	Ongoping	• Performance indicators to be determined	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Lewiston officials, representatives from local organizations
6(32)	6-14		The National Heritage Area should consider developing partnerships with organizations that own and operate thematically related sites located outside of the heritage area boundary, but within the limits of the Town of Lewiston.	Ongoing	• Increase in heritage area participation by representatives from thematically related sites in the Town of Porter	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, Town of Lewiston officials, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6.3.2 Revitalization in the Heritage Area Communities – City of Niagara Falls						
6(33)	6-14	The National Heritage Area should support the design and construction of the Niagara Experience Center as an interpretive center introducing visitors to the heritage area experience and serving as a transportation hub.	Ongoing	Ongoing	***See Actions 2(25) and 3(24) ***	Niagara Experience Center/ City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority
6(34)	Assist the City of Niagara Falls with the following projects as part of the heritage area's interpretive program:					
6(34a)	6-14	• Design and install high quality interpretive exhibits and public art in the downtown area, in particular in the vicinity of Old Falls Street and Rainbow Boulevard, presenting the heritage area theme Tourism and Recreation and enhancing the streetscape;	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	***See Actions 2(24) and 2(26)***	National Heritage Area coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(34b)	6-15	• Engage visitors at the site of the former Hydraulic Canal, Schoellkopf Power Station, and Aluminum Company of America plant on the edge of the Niagara Gorge to interpret the heritage area theme Power and Industry;	Annual interpretation work plan	Annual interpretation work plan	***See Action 2(43)***	National Heritage Area coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
6(34C)	6-15		• Develop plans for an extensive, world class landscape installation, such as a Power and Industry Plaza, as part of the city's newly envisioned Cultural District, also in the vicinity of the Gorge, interpreting the theme Power and Industry	Annual interpretation work plan	***See Action 2(43)***	National Heritage Area coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
6(34d)	6-15		• Develop a phased interpretation plan for the Buffalo Avenue industrial corridor to interpret the heritage area theme Power and Industry	Annual interpretation work plan	***See Action 2(43)***	National Heritage Area coordinating entity and partners as identified in the plan and modified over time
6(35)	6-15	The National Heritage Area should support the development of small businesses in the City of Niagara Falls that enhance and promote the heritage area experience and work with the City and local businesses on a program of quality standards and hospitality training.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Increase in number of small business startups and expansion of existing businesses • Establishment and sustaining of tourism-oriented businesses	Niagara USA (NTCC) Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Small Business Development Center, City of Niagara Falls

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(36)	6-15	The National Heritage Area should collaborate with the Niagara Falls community on resource enhancements, historic preservation initiatives, heritage programming, and events.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• The City is to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in the City's neighborhoods and commercial districts	City of Niagara Falls, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(37)	6-15		The National Heritage Area should partner with the City of Niagara Falls to provide small matching grants for façade improvements in commercial districts.	Ongoing	• Use Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation as a requirement for program applicants • Number of successful façade improvement projects	City of Niagara Falls, property owners and tenants, countywide historic preservation alliance and funding providers
6(38)	6-15			The National Heritage Area in partnership with the Heritage Tourism Institute at Niagara University should involve Niagara Falls residents in the Heritage Area Ambassadors and Certified Guides programs.	• Number of participants in training program • Number of active guides and ambassadors available to assist visitors in the heritage area. • Total number of hours worked by program participants	Niagara University, Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, Niagara Small Business Development Center, Village and Town of Lewiston, and Niagara County Community College
6(39)	6-15	The National Heritage Area will coordinate and collaborate with the Underground Railroad State Heritage Area in achieving community revitalization goals and objectives featured in both management plans.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Participation in Underground Railroad State Heritage Area meetings, activities and events • Number of collaborative projects and activities • Number of collective public outreach efforts	National Heritage Area/ Underground Railroad State Heritage Area
6(40)	6-15		The National Heritage Area should assist the LaSalle neighborhood in interpreting the Love Canal story and its significance to the national environmental movement.		• Exhibit design and content to follow best practices and guidelines • Receive honorary recognition received for project	National Heritage Area coordinating entity, City of Niagara Falls, representatives of LaSalle neighborhood, National Park Service

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 6 • Community Revitalization						
6(41)	6-15	The National Heritage Area in partnership with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. should assist neighborhood associations in preparing histories, advocating resource stewardship, and implementing historic preservation programs.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Neighborhood representatives to lead in establishing list of projects and priorities • Number of successful projects, programs and events completed in respective neighborhoods	City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc., coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6(42)	6-15		The National Heritage Area in partnership with the Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc. should assist in providing design consultation and technical assistance to owners of significant historic properties and should consider providing historic preservation training and certification for local trade workers and contractors.	Ongoing	• Use Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Historic Rehabilitation as a requirement for program applicants • Number of design assistance projects • Number of preservation-certified trade workers and contractors	City of Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls Historic Preservation Society, Inc., countywide historic preservation alliance, coalition of local business interests, property owners, and nonprofit organizations
6.3.3 The National Trust's Main Street Program						
6(43)	6-17	The National Heritage Area should consider partnering with local governments within the heritage area to approach the National Trust's Main Street Center to create a revitalization program for commercial districts using the Main Street approach.	Partner with local governments and non-profit organizations to create a revitalization program for commercial districts in the heritage area using the Main Street approach	Ongoing	• Increase in revenues for existing small businesses in historic commercial districts • Decrease in storefront vacancy rates • Increase in private sector investment for building improvements	New York Main Street Program, National Main Street Center, Village of Youngstown, Village of Lewiston, City of Niagara Falls, Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce, Niagara USA Chamber, Niagara Small Business Development Center, other local business organizations

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7.2.2 Managing the Coordinating Entity Effectively						
7(1)	7-4	Organize standing coordinating entity agendas around the topics of the management plan and resource development to maintain focus on the "big picture." Use the Executive Committee to review and approve agendas for each coordinating entity meeting.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Qualitative review of coordinating entity agendas vs. minutes (actual meeting performance)	Coordinating entity Chairman and Executive Committee
7.2.3 Coordinating Entity Committees						
7(2)	7-6	Organize standing coordinating entity committees around critical long-term topics of the management plan and critical functions of coordinating entity operations; be flexible as to committee assignments, membership, and responsibilities.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Organization of committees: how soon following plan approval, how many, and how many correspond to critical topics and functions • Qualitative review: variation as to assignments, membership, and responsibilities among committees • Frequency and regularity of committee meetings	Coordinating entity
7(3)	7-6	In establishing each committee, provide a specific job description.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Job descriptions for committees. • Adjustments to job descriptions over time	Coordinating entity
7(4)	7-6	Delegate detailed review of programs, projects, and operations to committees. Expect these committees to provide summary reporting in coordinating entity meetings in relation to accomplishments of the goals of the management plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Contributions of committee chairs to coordinating entity meetings (evaluate agendas and minutes) • Qualitative review of contributions of committees to coordinating entity function	Coordinating entity's committee chairs

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7(5)	7-6	Arrange coordinating entity meeting schedules to support members' spending time to support committees as well as to attend coordinating entity meetings.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Attendance by members of the coordinating entity's governing body at board and committee meetings • Time devoted to committees by members of coordinating entity's governing body	Coordinating entity Chairman and Executive Committee
7(6)	7-6	Establish an operations manual documenting all coordinating entity policies and procedures.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Operations manual completed • Kept up to date	Coordinating entity chief of staff
7.3.1 Elements of the Partnership System: Partners						
7(7)	7-9	Obtain letters of endorsement for this plan from partners and other existing and potential partners.			• Letters on file with coordinating entity	Coordinating entity
7(8)	7-9	Ask non-Commissioner representatives of partners represented on the coordinating entity and other partner representatives to serve on committees and working groups.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Participation of partner reps on committees	Coordinating entity Chairman
7.3.2 Elements of the Partnership System: Marketing Role and Partnerships						
7(9)	7-10	Establish a Tourism Marketing Committee.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Committee established • Contributions of committee chair to coordinating entity meetings Qualitative review of contributions of committee to coordinating entity function	Coordinating entity Chairman
7.3.3 Elements of the Partnership System: Federal Role						
7(10)	7-11	Request interpretive services from the National Park Service.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Numbers and nature of requests. • NPS services provided	Coordinating entity and NPS
7(11)	7-11	Seek "details" of personnel from the National Park Service to assist with short-term projects.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Numbers and nature of requests. • NPS services provided	Coordinating entity and NPS

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7(12)	7-11	Maintain a memorandum of understanding with the NPS for assistance with coordinating entity operations.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• MOU completed • NPS services provided	Coordinating entity and NPS
7(13)	7-11	Maintain NPS liaison role (as provided during management planning).	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Liaison provided • NPS services provided	Coordinating entity and NPS
7(14)	7-11	Build relationships with agencies at the federal level whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of agency contacts by coordinating entity and staff • Evidence of agency involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, federal agencies
7(15)	7-11	Provide routine briefings to members of the New York State Congressional delegation.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Frequency of briefings (at least annual)	Coordinating entity and staff
7.3.4 Elements of the Partnership System: Tribal Government Role						
7(16)	7-11	Engage in diplomatic relations with tribal nations and consult on projects of mutual benefit.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Frequency of meetings • Nature and frequency of other interaction • Evidence of nations' involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity Chairman and Secretary of the Interior
7.3.5 Elements of the Partnership System: State Role						
7(17)	7-12	Ensure high-level representation *ex officio* from OPRHP on the coordinating entity's governing board.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Administrative status of coordinating entity's OPRHP representative	Coordinating entity and OPRHP

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7(18)	7-12	Provide routine briefings to the Governor and seek help with coordination of state agencies' contributions to implementation of the management plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Frequency of briefings (at least annual) • Evidence of state agencies' involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding) as coordinated by the Governor and Governor's staff	Coordinating entity and Governor
7(19)	7-12	Provide routine briefings to elected officials representing heritage area jurisdictions in the State Senate and Assembly.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Frequency of briefings (at least annual)	Coordinating entity and state elected officials
7(20)	7-12	Build relationships with agencies at the state level whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of agency contacts by coordinating entity and/or staff and vice versa • Evidence of agency involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and state agencies
7.3.6 Elements of the Partnership System: Local Government Role						
7(21)	7-13	Provide routine briefings to local government officials.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Frequency of briefings (at least annual)	Coordinating entity and local government officials
7.3.7 Elements of the Partnership System: Partnerships with Related Agencies						
7(22)	7-16	Build a relationship with the Niagara River Greenway coordinating entity.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of Greenway contacts by coordinating entity and/or staff and vice versa • Evidence of Greenway involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, Greenway coordinating entity and staff

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7(23)	7-16	Build relationships with USA Niagara and other economic development agencies whose work affects the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area or which can provide services and funding.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of contacts with economic development agencies by coordinating entity and/or staff and vice versa • Evidence of economic development agencies' involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, USA Niagara and staff, other economic development agencies' officials and staff
7(24)	7-16	Build a relationship with the New York Power Authority.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of NYPA contacts by coordinating entity and/or staff and vice versa • Evidence of NYPA's involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, NYPA and staff
7(25)	7-16	Build a relationship with the Niagara Falls Bridge coordinating entity.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of NFBC contacts by coordinating entity • Evidence of NFBC involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, NFBC and staff
7(26)	7-16	Build a relationship with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of NFTA contacts by coordinating entity • Evidence of NFTA involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, NFTA and staff
7(27)	7-16	Build relationships with institutions of higher learning in or serving the National Heritage Area which can provide services and funding.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Number and frequency of institutional contacts by coordinating entity • Evidence of institutions' involvement in the NHA (actions, programs, services, funding)	Coordinating entity and staff, Niagara University, Niagara County Community College, University at Buffalo, Buffalo State University

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7.3.8 The Need for an Organization of "Friends"						
7(28)	7-17	Create a presence on Facebook to brand and build interest in the National Heritage Area and identify a following.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Active involvements in social media applications	Coordinating entity; partners to follow suit
7(29)	7-17	Evaluate the use of Facebook's feature allowing "fans" to self-identify as a first step in developing a following of "friends" for the National Heritage Area.	By completion of year four (fourth year following management plan approval).		• Number of Facebook fans	Coordinating entity
7.4 "Partner Development"						
7(30)	7-20	Recognize that coordinating entity actions and programs encompass elements of a partner development program; craft and budget for a full program and communicate to partners accordingly.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Completion of a fully designed partner development program • Funding devoted to partnership development; increase/decrease in absolute value and as a percentage of annual budgets	Coordinating entity and staff
7(31)	7-20	Reserve a portion of the coordinating entity's federal heritage area funding for small monetary grants that will build partners' capacity.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Funding devoted to monetary grants for capacity-building; increase/decrease in absolute value & as a percentage of annual budget; and as percentage of the partnership development budget	Coordinating entity
7.5 Communications						
7(32)	7-21	Create an annual communications plan within the coordinating entity's annual work plan, coordinating with interpretation, heritage tourism marketing, and fundraising piggybacking on the coordinating entity's activities regarded as having a communications dimension.	Annual work plan	Annual work plan	• Completion of an annual communications work plan on a timely basis tied to annual budget • Evaluation of annual communication plan to establish a plan for the following year	Coordinating entity and staff

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7(33)	7-21	Make permanent the current committee formed to advise the coordinating entity on planning, communications and public outreach during management plan.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Contributions of committee chair to coordinating entity meetings (evaluate agendas and minutes) • Qualitative review of committee	Coordinating entity Chairman
7(34)	7-22	Hold regular gatherings of partners to review progress on the management plan.	(At least biennially)	(At least biennially)	• Gathering held • Number of partners represented; number of individuals participating • Exit survey to measure satisfaction with meeting • Amount/quality of news coverage	Coordinating entity and staff
7(35)	7-22	Create an awards program to recognize meritorious individuals and programs.	(At least biennially)	(At least biennially)	• Awards program created • Amount/quality of news coverage	Coordinating entity and staff
7.6.2 Organizing for Resource Development						
7(36)	7-24	Establish and maintain a three-year strategic plan for resource development.	Annual	Annual	• 3-year strategic plan established. • Strategic plan maintained to provide 3-year horizon • Evaluation carried out to establish a plan for following year	Coordinating entity and staff
7.7.1 Getting the Work Done – Staffing and Support						
7(37)	7-26	Establish a three-year plan for the addition of staffing resources.			• Three-year staffing plan established (No later than end of second year following management plan approval)	Coordinating entity and staff
7(38)	7-26	Establish regular personnel and hiring/contracting procedures, including plans for staff training.			• Personnel/hiring procedures established • Contracting procedures for consulting services established. • Plans for staff training established • Staff training plans carried out	Coordinating entity and staff

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7.7.2 Financial Management						
7(39)	7-28	Establish a computerized financial management system that generates sufficient financial data for planning, resource development (fundraising) and administration, and reports to funders and the public.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Timely financial reporting using financial software • Timing of financial reporting provides adequate basis for planning and decision making • Resource development supported by adequate fiscal management • Financial reports to funders made on a timely basis. • Public release of financial statement	Coordinating entity and staff
7(40)	7-28	Establish regular financial procedures to support the coordinating entity's fiduciary responsibilities, including an annual budget and regular reviews of progress in meeting the budget.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Adequate financial reporting to coordinating entity • Annual budget established and maintained according to generally accepted accounting principles • Regular review of progress in meeting the budget	Coordinating entity and staff
7.8.2 The Importance of Annual Work Plans						
7(41)	7-29	Undertake three-year strategic planning on an annual basis in support of annual work planning. Establish an annual work plan in concordance with an annual budget.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Annual work plan established in accordance with annual budget • Evaluation carried out of annual work plan in order to establish a plan for the following year	Coordinating entity and staff
7.9.2 Annual Evaluation						
7(42)	7-31	Establish measurable objectives at the time each program is designed and inaugurated, for annual review and documentation.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Program designs include measurable objectives • Annual measurement when each program is in place	Coordinating entity and staff

Table 7.3 Summary of Plan Actions, by Proposed Phase, with Performance Indicators and Partner Roles

Ref #	Page #	Short Term (1-3 years)	Mid-term (4-7 years)	Long Term (8-10 years)	Performance Indicator(s) Note: Counts and percentages are to be completed annually unless otherwise noted.	Lead/Partners Note: Funding from Coordinating Entity may be included even if not identified.
Chapter 7 • Management, Implementation and Business Plan						
7.9.3 Meeting External Standards						
7(43)	7-31	In setting up the parallel nonprofit organization and organizing the coordinating entity's manual of operations, set basic standards of excellence and let partners, funders, and the public know such standards are part of the coordinating entity's expectations for doing business.	Ongoing	Ongoing	• Establish standards of excellence for coordinating entity operations using advice of established nonprofit advisory groups & standards set by State of NY • Apply similar standards of excellence in relations with partners, especially where coordinating entity assistance is provided to partners	Coordinating entity and staff

PO Box 1932, Niagara University, NY 14109

716.286.8579

www.nps.gov/nifa/